Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
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CONTENTS

NOTICE: An * indicates material that may not be disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Efforts To Improve PLO Ties With Syria Said To Progress *[AL-ITTIHAD 16 Feb]* 1
Inter-Arab Affairs: 'Arafat Discusses Peace With King Husayn, Mubarak *[Jericho VOP]* 1

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 13 Feb 1
Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 13 Feb 3

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Promises Charter Abolition Before Israeli Elections *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Abu-Mazin Says PLO, Israel Must Adhere to Commitments *[MENA]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: PLO Official Notes Difficulties in Amending Charter *[AL-QUDS 19 Feb]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: PLO Executive Committee To Hold Meeting in Gaza 8 Mar *[Jericho VOP]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: Political Bureau Member on DFLP Meetings in Damascus *[AL-QUDS 16 Feb]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: PFLP's Mustafa Rejects Proposal To Amend Charter *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 17 Feb]* 8

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: PLO, Israeli Officials Said To Meet To Amend PNC Charter *[MENA]* 8
Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Arafat, Israel's Savir Discuss Peace Process, Other Issues *[Jericho VOP]* 9

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Algeria: Envoy's Recall Cancelled After Mandela-Zeroual Contact *[Algiers Radio]* 10
Algeria: 17 Dead From 18 Feb Car Bombings *[Paris Teletext]* 10
Algeria: FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter *[Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT 13 Feb]* 10

Egypt

Egypt: FBI, CIA Officials Reportedly To Arrive in Cairo *[AL-AHALI 14 Feb]* 12
Egypt: Perry's Remarks on Israel's Military Superiority Criticized *[AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I 13 Feb]* 13
Egypt: AL-AKHBAR Criticizes Peres Policy on Talks With Syria *[MENA]* 14
Egypt: Egypt Said Watching Eritrean-Israeli Ties *[AL-SHA'B 16 Feb]* 14
Egypt: Eritrea Warned Against Escalating Dispute With Yemen *[MENA]* 14
Egypt: Weapons, Leaflets Seized From MB After Arrest *[MENA]* 15
Egypt: 4 Arrested Brothers Reportedly Linked to 'Abd-al-Rahman *[AFP]* 15

Egypt: Iraq's Return to Arab Ranks, 'Arab Reconciliation' Urged *[AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I 14 Feb]* 15

Sudan

Sudan: Al-Mahdi Blames Regime for Economic, Political 'Ruin' *[MENA]* 16

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Bahrain

Bahrain: Police, Protesters Clash in Shiite Areas *[AFP]* 17
Bahrain: 4 'Terrorists' Reportedly Arrested for Bombings *[AFP]* 17
Bahrain: Dailies Question Terrorist Acts Against Citizens *[WAKH]* 17

Qatar

Qatar: Ousted Amir, Foreigners Accused of Plotting Failed Coup *[AFP]* 18
Qatar: Military, Police Said Involved in Trying To Destabilize Security *[KUNA]* 18
Qatar: Minister Cited on 'Plotters,' Says Amir Was Never in Danger *[Doha Radio]* 19
Qatar: Gulf Council Meeting Requested To Discuss 'Vile Plot' *[Doha Radio]* 19
Qatar: 'Extensive Consultations' Reported on GCC Meeting *[Muscat Radio]* 19
Qatar: GCC Secretary General Condemns Sabotage Attempt *[Abu Dhabi Radio]* 19
Qatar: Amir Receives Ruling Family Members, Explains 'Conspiracy' *[Doha Radio]* 20
Qatar: Foreign Minister Reassures Omani Minister on Situation *[Doha Radio]* 20
Qatar: Yemeni President Contacts Amir, Voices Support *[Doha Radio]* 20
Qatar: Minister Denies Emergency Declared at Hamad Hospital *[Doha Radio]* 20

United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates: Daily—Saddam Fooled World Over Defections *[AFP]* 20

Yemen

Yemen: President Salih Addresses People on 'Id al-Fitr *[Sanaa Radio]* 21
Yemen: al-Iryani Discusses Eritrea Dispute With Ambassadors *[Sanaa Radio]* 22

IRAQ

Iraq: Baghdad 'Willing To Discuss Everything' at Oil-for-Food Talks *[London AL-HAYAH 15 Feb]* 23
Iraq: Talks Stalled on Northern Issue, Oil Costs *[London AL-HAYAH 19 Feb]* 24
Iraq: Ekeus Discusses Resolution 986 *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 19 Feb]* 25
Iraq: UN Secretary General Said Satisfied With Outcome of Talks *[INA]* 27
Iraq: Al-Mukhtar Says Success of Dialogue 'Matter of Time' *[INA]* 27
Iraq: Western Sources Cited on Oil-for-Food Talks *[London AL-HAYAH 17 Feb]* 28
Iraq: INA Rounds Up Dialogue With United Nations 29
Iraq: Daily Analyzes 'Positive Nature' of Talks With UN *[INA]* 30
Iraq: Irrigation Ministry Official Terms 'Water Talks 'Fruitful' *[INA]* 31
Iraq: Iran's 'Irresponsible' Policy Toward Country Criticized *[INA]* 31
Iraq: Baghdad TV Reports Return of Husayn Kamil 20 Feb *[Baghdad TV]* 32
Iraq: Husayn Kamil Ready To Stand Trial, Face Outcome *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 32
Iraq: Paper Sees 'Sure Signs' of Plan To Topple Regime *[London AL-HAYAH 17 Feb]* 33

ISRAEL

Israel: Coalition, Opposition Agree on 29 May Election Date *[Jerusalem Radio]* 34
Israel: Knesset Committee Approves Election Bill Formulation *[Jerusalem Radio]* 34

Israel: Knesset Discusses Jerusalem Bills, Election Regulations *[Jerusalem Radio]* 34
Israel: Security Sources Say Abortive Attack Directed at North *[Jerusalem Radio]* 34
Israel: Lubrani Comments on Abortive 'Terrorist' Attack *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 34
Israel: Northern Commander on Detection of Glider Attack *[Jerusalem Radio]* 35
Israel: Baraq on Negotiations With Lebanon, Jerusalem Issue *[Jerusalem Radio]* 35
Israel: Baraq—No Crisis With Russia; Visit Depends on Developments *[Jerusalem TV]* 36
Israel: Sources 'Concerned' About Islamic Coalition in Turkey *[Jerusalem Radio]* 36
Israel: Foreign Ministry Denies Reports on Israelis Jailed in Egypt *[Jerusalem Radio]* 36
Israel: Shahal Says U.S. Opposed Past Overtures to Iraq *[THE JERUSALEM POST 19 Feb]* 37
Israel: Iranian Spying Efforts Confront New Shin Bet Chief *[HA'ARETZ 19 Feb]* 37
Israel: Peres Reiterates Stand on United Jerusalem *[THE JERUSALEM POST 21 Feb]* 37
Israel: Majority Believes Likud More Than Labor on Jerusalem Issue *[MA'ARIV 20 Feb]* 38
Israel: David Levi Announces Establishment of New Party *[Jerusalem Radio]* 38
Israel: Levi Party To Join Any Government Accepting Its Principles *[THE JERUSALEM POST 21 Feb]* 38
Israel: Second Arrow Test Launch Termed 'Complete Success' *[Jerusalem Radio]* 38
Israel: Report on Palestinian Police Guarding 16 Feb Prayers Denied *[Jerusalem TV]* 39
Israel: Buchanan Said To Inflame 'Darker Passions' of Conservatives *[MA'ARIV 19 Feb]* 39

JORDAN

Jordan: al-Kabariti, Husayn Kamil Left 'of Own Free Will' *[Amman Radio]* 40
Jordan: Amman Urges Iraqi Opposition Charter *[London AL-HAYAH 18 Feb]* 40
Jordan: Editorial Justifies Opening of Iraqi Opposition Office *[JORDAN TIMES 20 Feb]* 40
Jordan: Anti-Normalization Committee Fires Shunaykat, Kamal Nasir *[AL-MAJD 19 Feb]* 41
Jordan: Direction of New Government Discussed *[JORDAN TIMES 19 Feb]* 41
Jordan: New Policy Statement Expected To Include Major Changes *[JORDAN TIMES 19 Feb]* 43
Jordan: Shubaylat Reported Apparent Winner of Association Election *[JORDAN TIMES 18 Feb]* 43
Jordan: Shubaylat Reelected to JEA Presidency, Remains in Detention *[Damascus Radio]* 44
Jordan: Report Indicates Increase in Volume of Foreign Investment *[JORDAN TIMES 17 Feb]* 44

LEBANON

Lebanon: Plane Explodes Near Israeli Border; Army Spokesman Cited *[Beirut Radio]* 45
Lebanon: UN Reported To Confirm Aborted 'Terrorist' Attack *[Jerusalem TV]* 45
Lebanon: Hizballah Denies Responsibility for Glider Attack Attempt *[Beirut Radio]* 45
Lebanon: Hizballah Radio Reports Israeli Flights Over South *[Voice of the Oppressed]* 45

SYRIA

Syria: Foreign Minister Views Peace Process *[London INDEPENDENT 21 Feb]* 46
Syria: Aggression Against Lebanon Called 'Rejection of Peace' *[Damascus Radio]* 47

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani Says Government Ready for Talks *[IRNA]* 48
Afghanistan: Iran, Pakistan Urge Peaceful Solution to Afghan Crisis *[IRNA]* 48
Afghanistan: Taleban Launches Attack on Kabul City, 40 Killed *[Kabul Radio]* 48
Afghanistan: Government Troops on 'Full Alert' in Kabul *[AFP]* 48

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Election Commission Declares Results of 119 Constituencies *[Dhaka Radio]* 49
Bangladesh: Election Monitoring Group Urges Cancelling Election Results *[AFP]* 49

Bangladesh: Prime Minister Offers To Hold Dialogue With Opposition *[Dhaka Radio]* 50

India

India: Rao Hopes U.S. Not To 'Impose' Arms Race in Region *[Delhi Radio]* 50
India: German Journalists Appeal for Release of Kashmir Hostages *[Delhi Radio]* 50
India: Kashmir Organization Leaders 'Manhandled' by Irate Mob *[Delhi Radio]* 51
India: Further on Attack Against Kashmir Organization Leaders *[AFP]* 51
India: Two Union Ministers Resign Over Money Scandal 20 Feb *[Delhi Radio]* 52

Iran

Iran: Khamene'i Gives Sermon on World Affairs, Elections *[Tehran TV]* 52
Iran: Turkey's 'Instability' Said To Increase Regional Tensions *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 13 Feb]* 54
Iran: Protests, Unrest in Bahrain Viewed *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 12 Feb]* 55
Iran: Roundtable Discussion on Election Procedure *[Tehran TV]* 57
Iran: Karrubi on Election Priorities, Results *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 8 Feb]* 58
Iran: Mohammadi-Reyshahri Interviewed on Elections *[HAMSHAHRI 8 Feb]* 61
Iran: Qom Friday Prayers Sermon on Majles Elections *[Tehran TV]* 63
Iran: Officials Say Elections Based on 'Lofty Objectives' *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 31 Jan]* ... 64
Iran: Militant Clergy Statement on Majles, Marches *[ABRAR 8 Feb]* 65

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto Accuses Opposition of Playing 'Agitation Politics' *[Islamabad Radio]* 67
Pakistan: Leghari Rules Out Signing CTBT 'Unilaterally' *[Islamabad TV]* 67
Pakistan: Leghari Welcomes Sharif's Statement on Nuclear Issue *[Islamabad Radio]* 67
Pakistan: Foreign Minister Describes U.S. Talks on Afghanistan *[Islamabad Radio]* 68
Pakistan: Foreign Office Denies Report of Tripartite Talks in Tehran *[THE NEWS 21 Feb]* ... 68
Pakistan: Police Question 'Arab National' Detained Near U.S. Embassy *[THE NATION 21 Feb]* 69
Pakistan: Altaf, Nawaz Meet To Review Political Situation *[DAWN 20 Feb]* 69
Pakistan: Missiles, Rockets Seized From Afghan Refugee Camp *[DAWN 17 Feb]* 70
Pakistan: Commentary Views Progress of Afghan Opposition Talks *[THE MUSLIM 18 Feb]* . 70
Pakistan: Editorial Responds To Delhi's Accusation of Terrorism Plot *[THE NATION 20 Feb]* 72

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: LTTE Says 2 Indian Ships Involved in Attack on Cadres *[Tamil Eelam News WWW 16 Feb]* 72
Sri Lanka: LTTE Notes Reaction in Tamil Nadu Over Indian Steps *[Tamil Eelam News WWW 17 Feb]* 73
Sri Lanka: LTTE Reports Government Attack on Arms Ship, Other Clashes *[Tamil Eelam News WWW 15 Feb]* 74

Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Efforts To Improve PLO Ties With Syria Said To Progress

JN2002115796 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 16 Feb 96 p 25

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo—AL-ITTIHAD—Muhammad Subayh, Palestine's permanent representative at the Arab League, said that Egyptian-Saudi mediation efforts to improve relations between Syria and the PLO achieved tangible progress during the past two days.

In exclusive statements to AL-ITTIHAD, Subayh said that Syrian-Palestinian and Palestinian-Lebanese relations will witness remarkable progress during the next few weeks. He said that Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department will shuttle between Damascus and Beirut to start a new dialogue with the leaderships of both countries and to agree on bringing Palestinian presence in them under control [taqnin].

For their part, Egyptian diplomatic sources told AL-ITTIHAD that Cairo proposed to Syrian and Lebanese officials that they arrange meetings between Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and the foreign ministers of the two countries in Cairo. These meetings would be held under Egyptian-Saudi sponsorship and as part of meetings of the Arab League's 105th session on the foreign ministerial level due to be held on 13 March to agree on principles of reconciliation between them.

The sources said Cairo informed the three parties that Egypt and Saudi Arabia are ready to attend the upcoming meetings in Cairo with the participation of the two countries' foreign ministers in these meetings.

Inter-Arab Affairs: 'Arafat Discusses Peace With King Husayn, Mubarak

JN2002085696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat and Jordan's King Husayn exchanged greetings on 'Id al-Fitr. The president also exchanged greetings on this occasion with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. In separate telephone calls, the president discussed with the two leaders the latest developments of the peace process in light of the Israeli violations of the signed agreements as well as current preparations to hold the Palestinian-Jordanian-Egyptian summit.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 13 Feb

NC1602151096

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 13 February edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Paper Portrays Ugly Effects of Siege on Iraq, Arab Countries
2. Details of U.S. Military Plan for Middle East Revealed
3. Paper Reports on Farakhan Activities in Sudan, Iran
4. Committee Calls For Halt of Violations Against Jailed Doctors
5. Brotherhood Give Iftar Banquet Attended by Opposition, Others
6. People Express 'Extreme Anger' Over Verdict Against Husayn
7. Column Says Government Should Start Dialogue With Brotherhood
8. Column Maintains al-Hisbah Applies in Truly Islamic Society

PAPER PORTRAYS UGLY EFFECTS OF SIEGE ON IRAQ, ARAB COUNTRIES

Page one publishes a disturbing picture of a child with a bloated belly and stick-like arms and legs. The caption under the picture reads "The Victims of the Siege." A 200-word paragraph comments on the picture saying in part: "This is a picture of an Iraqi child whose belly got bloated after the oppressive U.S. and western siege deprived it of medicines." It notes that "numerous besieged Arab countries fell under the blade of the U.S. guillotine" after some Arab rulers joined the conspiracy of the siege imposed on our people.

DETAILS OF U.S. MILITARY PLAN FOR MIDDLE EAST REVEALED

A 280-word report by Mahmud Bakri on page 1 reveals details of "the plan announced by U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry regarding U.S. military presence in the Middle East region." The plan stipulates a 25 percent increase in this presence in the next six months. The plan also entails cooperation with some Arab regimes and Israel in military matters. The report says: "As an initial estimate, 1,100 officers and soldiers from the Syrian forces will participate." The United States prefers to use Jordan and Israel as bases for launching any military operations. The report concludes that the United

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States wants to topple Saddam Husayn by cooperating with Jordan and to remove the rulers of Iran.

PAPER REPORTS ON FARAKHAN ACTIVITIES IN SUDAN, IRAN

Page 1 also publishes two reports, which are continued on page 8, on activities by Louis Farakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam in America. The first, a 1000-word report, discusses Islamic reaction to the U.S. siege on Sudan including statements by Farakhan and 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, the spiritual leader of Hizballah in Lebanon, among others. The report says Farakhan visited Khartoum for a few hours and met with Sudanese Leader al- Bashir, Hasan al-Turabi, the Sudanese foreign minister, and others. The report notes Farakhan announced after meeting al-Bashir that "they discussed the attack directed against Muslims in general, and Sudan in particular." He added: "40 million Muslims in the United States support Sudan." The rest of the report talks about Fadlallah's reaction to the siege on Sudan, as well as press and media reporting on the matter.

The second report consists of 130 words and reports on Farakhan's visit to Iran. He attended celebrations marking the Iranian revolution anniversary and delivered a speech in which he said: "I am your Muslim brother from the United States of America. I declare that we Muslims are proud of this Islamic revolution." He attacked the United States' anti-Iranian policy and noted that Iran leads "an Islamic revolution that is sweeping the world." The report concludes with Farakhan saying that his movement, the Nation of Islam in America, wants the United States to apply laws that are inspired by the Islamic shari'ah.

COMMITTEE CALLS FOR HALT OF VIOLATIONS AGAINST JAILED DOCTORS

A 250-word report on page 1 says that a delegation from the Arab Doctors' Union last Thursday [8 February] went to visit the doctors who have been put in prison for expressing their opinion. The report discusses the terrible conditions the jailed doctors are living under, such as the tight space they are held in, sleeping on the floor, absence of furniture, the cold, and other squalid conditions. "The human rights' committee of the Arab Doctors' Union called on all officials in Egypt and those interested in cases of freedom of opinion to intervene quickly in order to stop the dangerous human rights' violations," the report says.

BROTHERHOOD GIVE IFTAR BANQUET ATTENDED BY OPPOSITION, OTHERS

Page 4 publishes a 2500-word report by Qutub al-'Arabi on an iftar banquet given by the Muslim Brothers that was attended by representatives from the various opposition parties, the Copts, the associations, and public figures. Mustafa Mashhur, the Muslim Brotherhood's [MB] general guide, delivered the first speech in which he reviewed the events of the past year such as arrests, trials, extraordinary laws, Zionist belligerence, and the Arab rush to establish relations with Israel. The report says: "The Muslim Brothers confirmed that they will continue their call irrespective of the harm and oppression they are subjected to. They will extend their hands to all national forces to build the homeland. They will continue to be moderate, avoid violence, and raise the slogan 'Islam is the solution.' They will do all of this in peaceful and legal ways."

Other speakers at the banquet were Labor Party Leader Ibrahim Shukri who "condemned the military trials of MB leaders and demanded that a citizen be tried by his natural judge." Ibrahim al-Dasuqi Abazah delivered the Wafd Party's speech; Dr. Husam 'Isa spoke for the Nasirite Arab Democratic Party; Lawyer Maurice Sadiq for the Copts; Dr. 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Barri for the al-Azhar ulemas; and 'Aliyah al-Hudaybi for women. Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, the official spokesman for the Muslim Brothers, concluded the meeting with a speech in which he wondered how certain sides can reject dialogue with the MB and deny their existence. He said: "The time has come for every force in the country to confirm that they cannot exclude or ignore the other forces." He asked the government to first confirm the charges and accusations it levels against the MB, because false accusations fuel the fire of conflict.

PEOPLE EXPRESS 'EXTREME ANGER' OVER VERDICT AGAINST HUSAYN

Page 4 publishes a 1300-word report by Mujahid al-'Arusi in which he surveys the opinion of the Egyptian man on the street regarding the trials of journalists and the verdict against Majdi Ahmad Husayn, chief editor of AL-SHA'B newspaper. The reaction from the public has been one of extreme anger. Various people whose opinion were asked said journalists will have to look behind their backs all the time for fear of arrest. They criticize the government for announcing that law 93/1995 will be shelved until the new press law is issued, but then applying this law.

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COLUMN SAYS GOVERNMENT SHOULD START DIALOGUE WITH BROTHERHOOD

Ahmad al-Suyufi's 600-word "Vision" column is published on page 8. He was present at the iftar banquet given by the MB that was attended by "the most important parties, currents, and sects of the nation." After reviewing the speeches delivered during the banquet, he expresses surprise at MB Official Spokesman al-Hudaybi saying during the banquet that "there are no channels of communication with the authorities." All the important issues of the nation are resolved through the security forces, he notes. He wonders why the conflict with the MB should be resolved through the security forces and not through dialogue. He criticizes the government for holding a dialogue with the Jews and for adopting the policy of normalization. He says: "President al-Sadat was described as courageous when he went to the occupied territories to spread the peace he preached. Do our rulers have the courage not to go to the alien creatures they call the Islamic current, but to merely start a dialogue with them?" He believes that the MB has the right to establish a party and that it is the government's duty to bridge the gap between them. He concludes with an ironic question: "Do our rulers normalize relations and start dialogue only with the person whose first name is Cohen and second name is Rabin? Isn't there a wise and sensible man among you?"

COLUMN MAINTAINS AL-HISBAH APPLIES IN TRULY ISLAMIC SOCIETY

Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus writes his 600-word "Country Folk" column entitled "Al-Hisbah Law is No Good to Us" on the back page. In this column, he maintains that this law would apply very well in a truly Islamic society, as it did in the heyday of Islam. When society moved away from the application of Islamic shari'ah, al-Hisbah became a tool used for purposes God did not decree. He explains that al-Hisbah Law was established to protect society, not to separate husband from wife. He maintains that al-Hisbah requires a free Islamic society for it to apply properly. He argues that emergency laws apply in our society, which makes it a repressed society. Therefore, al-Hisbah Law cannot be applied correctly. He concludes: "We should first have the desire for change and reform in society, and only then can we resort to al-Hisbah Law and other Islamic regulations to establish a positive and free society."

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 13 Feb

NC1602154596

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 13 February edition of the Arabic-language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Pursuit of Knowledge Seen as Neglected Divine Duty
2. Columnist Complains of Extremist Preachers at Private Mosques
3. Doctors Challenge Mufti's Rulings on Circumcision, Transplants
4. Writer Denounces Bomb Attacks in Algeria During Ramadan
5. Head of Nigerian Islamic Endowment Society Interviewed
6. Writer Calls for Chechen Independence from Russia
7. Columnist Advocates Closer Military Cooperation With Saudi Arabia
8. Al-Azhar Grand Imam Comments on al-Hisbah, Other Issues
9. Mubarak's Patronage of Religious Ceremony Noted

PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE SEEN AS NEGLECTED DIVINE DUTY

A 700-word report by Jamal Salim on page 3 discusses a lecture by Islamic thinker Dr. Mustafa al-Shak'ah to a religious seminar held at the Cairo Opera House. Al-Shak'ah declares that learning is the real "absent duty" [al-faridah al-gha'ibah], a divinely imposed obligation that every Muslim must perform in addition to the declaration of the faith, daily prayer, fasting, alms giving, and pilgrimage. Citing the very first Koranic verse to be revealed to the Muhammad, "Read in the name of the Lord Who Has Created," as evidence of the divine injunction to acquire and disseminate learning, al-Shak'ah notes that the early Muslims built a civilization that was the foundation of the latter Western civilization.

He says: "The quest for learning is the absent duty neglected by contemporary Muslims. This requires comprehensive reform to eliminate the vestiges of backwardness that have placed us at the rear of all nations."

Note: Although not mentioned in the above article, proponents of an Islamic state usually use the term "al-faridah al-gha'ibah" to denote the Islamic government they wish to see established.

COLUMNIST COMPLAINS OF EXTREMIST PREACHERS AT PRIVATE MOSQUES

In the "In Total Frankness" column on page 6, Basyuni al-Halawani contributes a 650-word article entitled: "Private Mosques and a Painful Reality."

Al-Halawani admits that he formerly opposed the Awqaf Ministry's attempts to bring all privately built

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mosques under its jurisdiction. He explains that his opposition was based on that ministry's record and "its inability to select excellent preachers who are acceptable to the public." Now he wants to warn of "the infiltration of our private mosques by many extremists in the absence of the Awqaf Ministry's watchful eye, supervision, and control."

He says that he was recently "annoyed" by a preacher at a private Cairo mosque who told the worshipers that listening to music, playing cards, checkers, and chess, shaking hands with a woman who is not a blood relative, and installing an electric doorbell at home are all sinful actions. "Acutely frustrated" by these prohibitions, which he does not recognize as belonging to the same Islam he learned at al-Azhar, al-Halawani calls for "preachers who sincerely and truthfully embody the teachings of Islam and resist the many innovations and superstitions that control our lives." He urges the Awqaf Ministry and al-Azhar to shoulder their responsibility in providing such preachers.

DOCTORS CHALLENGE MUFTI'S RULINGS ON CIRCUMCISION, TRANSPLANTS

Two articles on page 10 express disagreement with religious rulings [fatwas] issued by Mufti of the Republic Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi on female circumcision and the transplanting of organs taken from condemned criminals.

The first is a 1,500-word article by Dr. Hatim Sa'd Isma'il, professor of gynecology at 'Ayn Shams University's Medical School. He says that the mufti, who in 1994 issued a fatwa favoring female circumcision, issued a contrary fatwa in 1995 during the convention of the UN International Conference on Population and Development, saying that unlike male circumcision, which is obligatory, there is no clear text in the Koran or the prophet's tradition regarding female circumcision. The mufti said that hence female circumcision is "a custom, not a religious observance".

Dr. 'Isma'il quotes several sayings from the Prophet Muhammad's tradition that prove that female circumcision is required. He also offers the medical view that, conducted under sound hygienic surgical conditions and with the use of anesthesia, female circumcision is beneficial.

On another matter, he says that some doctors at government universities are removing the corneas of recently deceased patients to use for transplants on the strength of the mufti's ruling that allows competent medical authorities to remove organs for transplants from deceased patients and condemned criminals. Isma'il says a religious ruling should not depend on "competent medical authorities" but must be based on specific texts from the Koran or the prophet's tradition.

In the second article, 800 words long, under the headline "This Is a Theft of Human Organs," Dr. Fu'ad al-Rijili disputes the mufti's ruling allowing the removal of the organs of condemned criminals immediately after hanging and from comatos3e patients who are declared clinically dead. Al-Rijili says that some comatose patients revive; therefore, removal of organs from such patients is "premeditated murder."

WRITER DENOUNCES BOMB ATTACKS IN ALGERIA DURING RAMADAN

A 400-word article on page 21, in the "Muslims Worldwide" section, castigates the perpetrators of recent car bombings in Algeria, especially because the attacks occurred in the month of Ramadan. The writer, Ashraf Abu-al-Hawl says:

"No one knows when this dirty war will end. It is completely unjustifiable. It is neither a struggle against the government nor a championing of Islam because the victims are always ordinary, innocent citizens who are fasting when the shrapnel hits them."

He expresses astonishment at the escalation of violence despite the presidential election held in November 1995, President Liamine Zeroual's declared willingness to hold a dialogue to find a peaceful solution to the crisis, the Islamic Salvation Front's renunciation of the "dirty war", and the call for a dialogue by Anouar Haddam, one of its leaders abroad.

HEAD OF NIGERIAN ISLAMIC ENDOWMENT SOCIETY INTERVIEWED

Page 20 in the "Muslims Worldwide" section also features a 1,500- word interview with Ahmed Limo, the chairman of Nigeria's Islamic Endowments Society, by 'AQIDATI correspondent Jamal Salim.

Limo lists the goals of his organization as: providing financial support to Islamic educational institutions, using the revenue of Islamic properties held in trust; providing assistance to the Muslim poor, hospitals, and orphanages; propagating sound Islamic teachings in Nigeria as a defense against the "external campaigns conducted by the nation's enemies, including proselytizing and the dissemination of atheistic ideas that oppose all heavenly religions, notably Islam"; and finally forging closer links with major Islamic establishments such as al-Azhar in Egypt. He says that his organization recently joined the International Council for Call and Relief.

Limo complains of the dangers of Christian proselytization in Africa, particularly in Nigeria because it is one

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of the largest African countries. He says proselytizers offer material enticements, including assistance to hospitals and indigent Muslims. He notes Pope John Paul II's proclamation that he wants to turn Africa into a Christian continent.

He blames Muslim divisions and inter-Muslim conflicts, poverty, and disease for the success of proselytization and calls for more Islamic unity and the promotion of the concept of a single Muslim nation that transcends national boundaries.

WRITER CALLS FOR CHECHEN INDEPENDENCE FROM RUSSIA

Also in the "Muslims Worldwide" section on page 21 is a 250-word article by 'Adil Dayf, who advocates Chechen independence and an unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops from the Chechen Republic.

He says: "It would perhaps be useful now for Russia, following its successive defeats in Chechnya, to accept the facts and withdraw unconditionally. Until a permanent and definitive solution is found, the Russian forces will never be able to get out of the quagmire into which they have fallen. We hope that the Chechen people will regain their freedom and independence and that Russia will abandon its destructive, expansionist dreams."

COLUMNIST ADVOCATES CLOSER MILITARY COOPERATION WITH SAUDI ARABIA

Writing in his regular "Reflections on the Faith" feature on page 7, where he usually writes on exclusively religious matters, 'Abd- al-'Aziz Sadiq apologizes to the readers for "moving a little away from religious issues this week" to discuss something else that he believes "is at the heart of religion and faith."

The issue at hand concerns a call he wishes to make for closer military cooperation between Egypt and Saudi Arabia for the purpose of defending the security of both the Gulf and Red Sea regions. He notes the strategic importance of these two bodies of water to Saudi Arabia, which has long coasts on both of them. He refers to the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the Red Sea island of al-Hanish al- Kabir and Israel's interest in cooperation with Eritrea. He says that "following Eritrea's independence in 1994, Afworki established diplomatic ties with Israel, and last December Yemen accused Israel of supplying Eritrea with military equipment which it used when its forces attacked al-Hanish al-Kabir island."

He concludes: "For all these reasons, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are urged to forge close cooperation and a high level of integration in the military field as soon as possible."

Sadiq says this issue came to mind during a recent minor pilgrimage he made to Saudi Arabia, during which he met with old friends, colleagues, and "comrades in arms."

AL-AZHAR GRAND IMAM COMMENTS ON AL-HISBAH, OTHER ISSUES

On pages 8 and 9 there is a 4,000-word exchange between readers and Shaykh Jad-al-Haqq 'Ali Jad-al-Haqq, grand imam of al-Azhar, asking for his opinions on a wide range of issues. The layout is in interview form and the subjects discussed include, among others, the mixing of the sexes at universities, women's sports, educational and organizational affairs pertaining to al-Azhar-affiliated schools, and uniforms for al-Azhar female students.

Jad-al-Haqq discourages the mixing of male and female students at universities, except in uncrowded, public places, and says that conversation on such occasions must not be of an amorous nature. On sports, he says women should not engage in games that reveal their bodies or are too strenuous for them. He defends al-Azhar's reliance on donations by the public in order to set up schools in rural areas by saying that the budget provided by the state to al- Azhar is limited and insufficient to build all the needed educational institutions. On uniforms, he says there is no need for a unified uniform for female students at al-Azhar as long as they are modestly dressed.

Asked to comment on Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' remark that Jerusalem is politically closed but religiously open, Jad-al- Haqq says that it is known that Jerusalem will be discussed during the permanent status negotiations and Peres merely wants to test the firmness of Arab resolve on this issue. Jad-al-Haqq urges the Arab media to focus in detail on the statements that Peres makes on this matter and the responses made by Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa.

One reader asks about al-Azhar's role in the current furor over al-Hisbah, the system by which one Muslim can take another Muslim to court if he judges that his actions or writings contradict Islamic teachings. The reader blames the furor on al-Azhar's negligence and its failure to play a more assertive role in the matter. Jad-al- Haqq replies that al-Azhar's role is to educate and not follow up people's personal problems. He declares that al-Hisbah is "a strong component and instrument" of the divine injunction to promote virtue and suppress vice and disagrees with the opinion voiced by some people that "it does not come from the Koran or the prophet's tradition." Apparently referring to the recent law passed by the People's Assembly, which gave the

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General Prosecutor's Office sole jurisdiction to bring al-Hizbah lawsuits before the courts, the al- Azhar shaykh says: "The issue merely needed organization, only organization. It is the duty of us all to defend Islam."

MUBARAK'S PATRONAGE OF RELIGIOUS CEREMONY NOTED

The paper's lead story on page 1, accompanied by a red banner headline saying "Five Million Pounds to Reciters of the Holy Koran," is a brief 200-word preview by Muhammad al-Abnudi of Mubarak's patronage of the ceremony planned for 15 February on the occasion of the Night of the Revelation of the Koran. Al-Abnudi reports that Mubarak will hand out awards to students of the Koran amounting in all to 5 million pounds, with the first contestant getting 30,000 pounds. He says that delegations from 92 countries will attend the ceremony including five Koran reciting contestants from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Promises Charter Abolition Before Israeli Elections

TA2102080196 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat promised Prime Minister Peres that the Palestinian Charter would be abolished before elections in Israel. A political element believes the charter will be rescinded in two stages. Upon the convening of the Palestine National Council [PNC], the clauses calling for the annihilation of Israel will be erased and a new constitution will be formulated. In the second stage, the new formulation will be brought to the PNC for ratification. Our political correspondent Udi Segal is in the studio:

[Segal] Good morning. Messages relayed by Yasir 'Arafat to Jerusalem indicate that he intends to appoint the elected council immediately upon the conclusion of 'Id al-Fitr, at the end of this week or the beginning of next week. Yasir 'Arafat promised Shim'on Peres to cancel the Palestinian Charter prior to elections in Israel. Officially, by the agreement, 'Arafat must cancel the Charter two months after the establishment of the elected council. People who talked to 'Arafat lately say he clearly understands the political importance of the abolition of the Charter from the viewpoint of Peres and Labor. It was recently learned that he is considering doing so in two stages. In the first stage, when the PNC is convened, on 20 April, 'Arafat will cancel the clauses calling for Israel's annihilation and will announce the establishment of a team for the formulation of a constitution. Only at a later stage, apparently after elections in Israel, will 'Arafat bring the formulation of the constitution to the PNC for ratification.

This plan is very convenient for Peres, politically. Before the elections, he will be able to point to the abolition of the charter as an impressive achievement, without 'Arafat's newly formulated constitution — which is sure to include declarations about Jerusalem and the refugees — clouding this achievement. It is said in Labor that 'Arafat understands that such a move provides political ammunition to Peres and embarrasses the Likud. Labor hopes 'Arafat will keep his promises.

Palestinian Affairs: Abu-Mazin Says PLO, Israel Must Adhere to Commitments

NC2102085096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0606 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Feb (MENA)—PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, has reaffirmed that the PLO must amend the Palestinian National Charter in a way that does not clash with its commitments or with international legitimacy.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM newspaper today, Abu-Mazin, who is supervising the final stage negotiations between Palestine and Israel, welcomed the call by President Husni Mubarak and Jordanian Monarch King Husayn for convening a tripartite summit between them and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

He noted Egypt's role and participation in the peace process. He said the Palestinians need this role, as well as Egypt's expertise and consultations.

Abu-Mazin described Palestinian-Jordanian relations as very good, particularly after the meeting between President 'Arafat and King Husayn in Amman last month. He pointed out that during this meeting, agreement was reached to continue consultations and meetings between the two sides.

On the situation in Hebron, Abu-Mazin affirmed that there is an Israeli commitment to withdraw from the city in March as stipulated by the Oslo agreement. Abu-Mazin stressed that the Israeli authorities must release detainees held in Israeli prisons. He said commitments bind both sides, not one side only.

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Palestinian Affairs: PLO Official Notes Difficulties in Amending Charter

TA2002165696 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 19 Feb 96 p 7

[Report by 'Imad al-'Ifranji]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jamal al-Surani, secretary of the PLO Executive Committee, has affirmed that the committee will hold all its meetings inside the homeland and will set up its temporary headquarters in Gaza, from where it will operate until it sets up a permanent headquarters in Jerusalem in the future. He pointed out that committee members will participate in the upcoming Palestinian cabinet.

Al-Surani said that by seeking to annul part or all of the Palestinian National Charter, Israel wants to distort the Palestinian cause and portray the PLO as a hostile terrorist organization and a group of murderers. This is an attempt to negate history and the national struggle and abolish the Palestinian entity. He added that the process of canceling the Charter's articles will be difficult and that the Palestine National Council [PNC] may settle for issuing a statement or an action plan based on the PNC's declaration of independence, the establishment of two states, withdrawal on the basis of Security Council resolutions, and the principle of land for peace. He added that if the Israelis want the Charter abolished, they should repeal their decisions on a Greater Israel, an Israel from the Euphrates to the Nile, and an Israel whose borders are wherever an Israeli soldier stands.

Al-Surani believes that the Palestinians have moved from the battle of the bullet to the battle of words, but the same battle will continue until the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. He said that the Palestinian elections have dazzled the world. As a whole, they can be attributed to the first rather than the third world.

Palestinian Affairs: PLO Executive Committee To Hold Meeting in Gaza 8 Mar

JN2102113196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1000 GMT 21 Feb 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jamal al-Surani, secretary of the PLO Executive Committee, affirmed that the committee will hold a meeting in Gaza on 8 March. In statements to Voice of Palestine, al-Surani said that during the meeting, which will be chaired by President Yasir 'Arafat, the PLO Executive Committee will discuss a number of important issues. These issues include settlement building; the confiscation of land; Israeli violations of the agreement; the issue of crossings, which has not yet been implemented; the military siege policy adopted by the occupation authorities; and issues that will be discussed during negotiations on the final stage, especially Jerusalem, the settlements, the refugees, the borders, and the prisoners.

Furthermore, the PLO Executive Committee will discuss a date for the elected Legislative Council's meeting, forming the council of ministers, and calling on the Palestinian National Authority to hold a meeting. Al-Surani said that an invitation to attend the meeting is extended to all members of the PLO Executive Committee inside and outside the homeland.

This PLO Executive Committee meeting comes as a continuation of its meetings, which began in the Egyptian city of al-'Arish on 5 February. The committee's meeting is the second one that will be held inside the homeland.

Palestinian Affairs: Political Bureau Member on DFLP Meetings in Damascus

TA2002151996 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 16 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by special AL-QUDS correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — The political bureau of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] has decided to launch a comprehensive national dialogue with Palestinian national forces to draw up a political action program for the final stage talks on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

At the conclusion of the DFLP political bureau meetings in Damascus, which lasted four days and included the participation of key political bureau and central committee members from inside the territories, political bureau member Taysir Khalid said: "We are endeavoring to reach an action plan with Fatah, the largest Palestinian organization; the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]; the Islamic Jihad; and national figures and organizations." Khalid stressed that the political bureau's decision to launch this dialogue also seeks to circumvent the Oslo formula and rely on the Palestine National Council's [PNC] resolutions, approved at its last session, and on the resolutions of international legitimacy relating to the Palestinian problem.

Khalid said that the dialogue's success will depend on Fatah's readiness to work jointly with the other forces in preparing a political program that circumvents the Oslo accords. He added that the other forces are either unanimous in rejecting Oslo or have reservations about it. Khalid did not say, however, when the DFLP

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leadership intends to hold its actual contacts with Fatah and the other forces to launch the process of dialogue.

Khalid noted that a reassessment of all Palestinian developments since the signing of Oslo is important for the Palestinian forces to decide on joint steps.

Khalid emphasized that the DFLP political bureau discussed the issue of convening a new PNC session. He added that the political bureau adopted a decision to boycott the PNC meetings if they are devoted to reviewing the Palestinian National Charter. He said that the DFLP leadership affirmed its support for the initiative by the committee in defense of the Palestinian Charter in Amman.

The committee in defense of the charter, which includes representatives from Palestinian opposition factions and independent national figures, has called on PNC members not to amend the charter as long as Israel continues its policy of Judaizing Jerusalem, practices its settlement activities, and keeps ignoring the resolutions of international legitimacy relating to the Palestinian problem.

Khalid disclosed that the DFLP intends to secure the return of leading members of its political bureau and central committee to the territories. He said that the DFLP's main focus in the coming stages will be inside the Palestinian territories.

Khalid, who is a PLO Executive Committee member, demanded that the PLO handle the final stage negotiations with Israel. He said that in its meetings, which ended on 12 February, the DFLP political bureau affirmed the front's readiness to participate in these talks. He emphasized, however, that the DFLP's readiness is conditional on the formulation of a political program based on previous PNC decisions and the resolutions of international legitimacy relating to the Palestinian problem.

He stressed that the DFLP will not agree to participate in the final talks on the basis of the Oslo accords.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP's Mustafa Rejects Proposal To Amend Charter

MM2002143696 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 Feb 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "The Assistant General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Are Committed to the Palestinian National Charter, We Warn Anyone Against Tampering With It"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Abu-'Ali Mustafa, assistant general secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], has said that his front is committed to the Palestinian National Charter and warns against tampering with it.

In an interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Tunis on his return from Libya, Abu-'Ali Mustafa said that the PFLP will not participate in a [Palestine] National Council [meeting] calling for amending the Charter. Abu-'Ali explained that the Charter is the expression of the Palestinian people's unity and determination to consolidate their historical rights, national identity, and aspirations, and therefore this Charter is at odds with the Zionist entity. He stressed that "the PFLP views the call to amend the National Charter as a political attempt to break Palestinian unity and cause a rift between Palestinians in the territories and those abroad, and between historical rights and current solutions."

In response to those who propose to drop the Charter Abu-Mustafa [as published] said that "this is totally out of the question, because the Palestinian issue is still the cause for struggle with the Zionist enemy, and the Oslo-1 and Oslo-2 agreements are not the end of the road in this struggle and have not secured the minimum national rights for the Palestinian people." He explained that, thus far, there has been no official announcement with regard to convening the [Palestine] National Council, pointing out that "this council was kept away by the official leadership for four and a half years, despite the developments in the Palestinian arena, especially with regard to the settlement which required that it convene in order to perform its national role." Abu-'Ali expressed his regret that "the council should be now called on to drop the Charter, as a debt to the Israelis."

In response to those who offer alternatives to revoking or amending the Palestinian Charter and are demanding a new constitution, Abu-'Ali said: "For whom is this constitution intended? Is it for the Palestinian Authority or the PLO? Moreover, which section of the Palestinian people does this constitution concern? Is it those in the [West] Bank and the [Gaza] Strip, or those in the diaspora?"

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: PLO, Israeli Officials Said To Meet To Amend PNC Charter

NC1902132496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1237 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed Palestinian sources state that Yo'el Singer, the Israeli Government's legal adviser, has held a secret meeting in Tunis with Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, a PLO Executive Committee member and supervisor of the negotiations with

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Israel on the final stage of the Palestinian issue. These sources say that Abu-Mazin and Singer discussed a suitable formula for the amendment Israel is demanding to the Palestine National Council [PNC] Charter and deleting the clauses calling for the destruction of Israel. The sources note that Singer stressed the need to hold a PNC meeting as soon as possible to make this amendment in the current charter or the new one. He also stressed the need to make the amendment before the Israeli elections scheduled for the end of May to strengthen the Labor Party's position in the elections and the position of Prime Minister Shim'on Peres', who is leading the peace process in his country.

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Arafat, Israel's Savir Discuss Peace Process, Other Issues

JN1802154396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 18 Feb 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat met with Uri Savir, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, at the president's office in Gaza this afternoon. Savir conveyed a message to President 'Arafat from Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres on ways to protect the peace process and create an appropriate climate for its success.

Ahmad Quray', member of the elected Legislative Council, stated that the meeting covered all issues. He said that the Palestinian side raised several issues, including settlements, prisoners, and obstacles to a successful peace process. Quray', who attended the meeting, added that the Israeli side also raised several issues for discussion to avoid obstacles to a successful peace process.

Quray' asserted that the two sides then tackled the upcoming meeting of the Palestine National Council [PNC], as well as arrangements by President 'Arafat, the National Authority, and the PLO to hold a PNC meeting, in accordance with the agreements.

Savir said that he and President 'Arafat discussed mutual pledges to implement all the agreements and also worked out ways to guarantee these agreements are implemented. Savir said that a solution was reached on the Rachel's Tomb issue and that all other problems will be solved.

Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh and several officials also attended the meeting.

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Algeria

Algeria: Envoy's Recall Cancelled After Mandela-Zeroual Contact

LD2102122896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The turbulence in Algerian-South African relations has proved fleeting. In a communique this morning, the foreign minister [Ahmed Attaf] says that the president of the republic [Liamine Zeroual] received a telephone call from Nelson Mandela, the president of the Republic of South Africa, yesterday evening, following the unfortunate audience he recently granted to Anouar Haddam, one of the people behind the terrorist crimes in Algeria. The communique also recalls — as was announced by a previous Foreign Ministry communiqure on 18 February — that the Algerian ambassador in Pretoria [Said Kitouni] has been received by Alfred Nzo, the South African foreign minister, to whom he made a protest over this audience.

As a result of the satisfactory explanations received, notably on the occasion of the telephone conversation between Presidents Liamine Zeroual and Nelson Mandela, the decision to recall the Algerian ambassador to South Africa for consultation has been cancelled, concludes the Foreign Ministry's press communique.

Algeria: 17 Dead From 18 Feb Car Bombings

LD2102111596 Paris France-2 Teletext in French 1004 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At least 17 people were killed in the two car bomb attacks in Algeria on Sunday [18 February] instead of the 12 announced previously, according to the Algiers daily LA TRIBUNE.

Wednesday's edition of LA TRIBUNE reports that four of those injured in the attack in Ain Taya have died of their wounds, bringing the number of casualties up from eight to 12.

One person injured in the attack in Ain Nadja has also died of their wounds, bringing the number of casualties up from four to five. Two are missing in Ain Taya.

Algeria: FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS1602133096 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 13 Feb 96

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria" published by Islamic Salvation Front "supporters in Europe"; quotation marks as received — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Editorial —

The dictatorship and its incompetency: the real destructor of Algeria!

Praise be to Allah,

Observers of the Algerian scene have by now reached a unanimous verdict namely that the elections staged by the military regime on the 16/11/95 have changed nothing to the situation, on the contrary and as time is wasted away, it seems that these elections have become a supplementary obstacle for any hope of normalisation.

Indeed how can those elections be a part of a global solution when the military regime arrogance has renamed them "the plebiscite of the 16/11/96"? Rephrasing it will mean that the people have finally gave their support to the military regime which launched its troops on the street to nullify the free choice made by the Algerian people in December 1992, declared a state of emergency, decided to "ban" the party winner of the elections, applied mass killing and torture, set up concentration camps etc... with the objective of "eradicating" everybody and everything that remind of the "wrong popular choice". This was a very serious historical injustice for which there will be no hope of an Algeria in peace with itself if just settlements are swept under the carpet of a dictatorship which tries to impose its rule over the Algerian people by force and deceit. Five years later and despite the propaganda of the military regime, there is still going on the armed struggle of those who found in the clandestinity and in the maquis their only salvation and mode of expressing the refusal of "the decency to be walked over by the immoral".

Violence outside the framework of the legitimate armed struggle, has indeed been beneficial to the regime in military, political and social aspects such that the regime itself has become the main designer, programmer and executant of the most atrocious crime against civilians. This violence in its rhythm, periodicity and most of all in its perfect coincidence with early signals of political and social coming unrest, has frozen all legitimate social demands of the ordinary Algerian guy despite the economical catastrophe the country has been subjected to by the incompetency of the military regime technocrats.

The military dictatorship has decided unilaterally as usual, to cut the workers income to up to a week wage for the rest of the 1996 year. Of course the Generals as usual again, have taken the precaution of linking to this unpopular measures, the single name of the new prime minister, Mr Ouyahia who is not different from the previous "used, abused and disposed of" prime ministers. Some observers believe that this unpopular and unjust measure is not really driven by a lack of financial resources but are just a psychological

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preparation for the state sector workers to make the privatisation of their companies a demand of their own under the "induced logic": "if the state cannot even pay me my wage then private ownership can only be better!".

The "pressure is building up" in the central syndicate UGTA [expansion unknown] which is more than two millions members strong. The UGTA has started to threaten the government with a general strike. Then one of the UGTA influential member and editorialist of its magazine was gunned down by "an unidentified terrorist". This did not stop this time, the UGTA to carry on its attack against the government and to prepare for the strike. It is not excluded that "violence" will strike again the workers and their syndicate as long as they dare oppose the dictatorship in whatever "territory".

The private press has also been making some noises about the heavy interference of the dictatorship in what the journalists see as their right to inform the public. The military regime does not see it that way particularly when covering what it calls "information of a security type" (armed struggle). The dictatorship wants the private press to obey by the rules set up in a document established by the regimes interior minister and which if followed to the letter will make the press an integral part of the dictatorship propaganda apparatus. There were last week a surprising campaign of resistance launched by this press. Then a "terrorist" bomb exploded and destroyed many of the above private press newspapers and killed many, including an editorialist. At the moment everyone is under shock and nobody knows if the private press will continues the confrontation with the dictatorship or to "jump back into its protective arms" and "avoid the terrorists anger"!

This is the distressing cycle the dictatorship has been serving Algeria with since January 1992.

May Allah give that country a safe exit. Amine!

Bombs explosions!

An explosion from a booby-trapped car has caused important human and material damages last Sunday in Algiers. The target was "la maison de la press" (the house of the press) situated in the popular town of Belcourt. The announced number of victims was 18 dead and 52 injured. Many private newspapers have had their offices destroyed. This explosion came about six hours after another one in another popular town of Bab El Oued which has caused 41 injured, amongst them six in serious condition. No one has authentically claimed responsibility. The number of civilian victims has dramatically increased lately.

National General strike!

The two million member-strong syndicate UGTA has launched an appeal for a national strike to protest against the military regimes unilateral decision to cut down wages of the workers. This unjust and arbitrary decision has come under already tough conditions of survival for the workers which have been hit by "staff compression" and delays of up to 27 months in wages payment. This cut in wages was apparently elaborated to pay those who have not been paid for a long time. The Military regime has taken the precaution of linking this "initiative" to the person of the new prime minister Mr Ouyahia so that if things go badly he will be "offered to the lions" as it has been a custom of the military dictatorship to sacrifice its technocrats.

The general strike of two days has been followed by all workers in all parts of Algeria as of the first day (Monday) and the UGTA demand is nothing but the withdrawal of the unjust improvisation at the expense of the workers sweat.

The Military dictatorship "tightens" the press further!

The military regime has decided to follow the Tunisian way of censuring the press. This method consists of a "prior control" of the press before it is published. The military dictatorship has established "reading committees" at the printing plants with the prerogatives of stopping anything they do not like. This unconstitutional act shows clearly that those in power do not respect their own laws which give them already all the tools they need to counter the press but through tribunals and never before press. The pretext given by the dictatorship is that the private newspapers are not following the "guidelines" of the regime interior ministry which imposes on them to publish information given officially by the propaganda machine APS [expansion unknown] only and with a strict respect for the text and the form in the domain of what they call "security news" (the armed struggle). The private press has surprisingly started to react to the dictate of the regime. How far can they go is hard to say for a body known to be infected by the regime secret police (La S.M) agents.

The previous regime Prime Minister was lying to the people!

The regime "parliament" has brought the proof that the previous military regime Prime Minister Mr Sifi has been lying all the way to the Algerian people. An high official in that "parliament" went on a tour in many regions of the country particularly those which the previous prime minister has declared that miracles has been achieved such as in the construction sectors.

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The conclusions of the official is in his own word:" they (government) should stop lying to the Algerian people and stop the demagogy, if some projects cannot be concretised let us say so and not the contrary!" No comment!

News of jihad and Mujahidin!

"To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged, and verily, Allah is Most powerful for their aid" [Koran, Sura al-Hajj, 22:39]

" We don't like to " beat around the bush ", we prefer clarity and frankness even if it means to be hanged for what we believe to be a duty and a right. The struggle against the regime of the military junta has become a legitimate and lawful duty as demonstrated previously, in order to "grab" the right of the people to freely choose. " ((Shaykh Abu Abdelfatah ALI BELHADJ in "Fasl al- kalam fi muwajahat zulm al-hukkam" ("The conclusive criterion in confronting injustice from the rulers"). page 303. Book written from cell No 09 in the Blida Military jail. 1992))

Chlef: The "Salvation unit" of the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) has set up an ambush to an armed militia patrol. After a heavy crossfire, two armed militia were neutralised and the third severely wounded. In another military operation, the same Mujahidin unit has attack an armed militia center situated at about one hundred meters from the police center in the middle of the city of Oued Rhio. Six armed militia and a policeman were neutralised and two others wounded. Boukadir: In a crossfire between the Mujahidin of the AIS and a unit of armed militia, seven of the latter were neutralised for good.

Ghelizan: The Mujahidin of the AIS have attacked an observation post guarded by a group of four armed militia. All of the armed militia were neutralised and their weapons collected. This military operation was followed by the sending of Junta troops with the support of the aviation to the region. Allah has decreed to the Mujahidin to return safely to their bases.

Mascara: In a "combing operation" launched by the Junta troops against a group of 37 Mujahid near a cave known as "El Kut cave", 11 were able to cut a passage while 16 have won martyrdom Insha Allah after 20 days of encirclement and hard crossfire between the two forces. The rest of the Mujahidin retreated into the cave when the Junta troops decided to close the only entrance to the cave and to dynamite the whole thing. Suddenly heavy showers started to poor which caused inundations which caused opening of the cave from another location and the safe retreat of the Mujahidin. Praise be to Allah. This operation has caused the Junta twenty five soldiers.

Collo: The Mujahidin have purposely attracted a group of Junta troops and a group of armed militia which were with them, to an empty ex-Mujahidin center which was loaded with explosives. Thirty three Junta soldiers and five armed militia perished in this operation.

In the mountains of the same region (Collo), the Mujahidin have attacked an armed militia patrol. Four of the militia men were neutralised for good.

Ouled Attia: Two armed militia men were killed.

Zemoura: The Mujahidin of the AIS have neutralised for good a Junta officer having the rank of commander in the locality of

Zemoura (Ghelizan).

Bab El Oued: An officer from the secret police of the Junta was neutralised for good, his weapon and documents were collected. In another operation, a police car was the target of a bullet firing. Three policemen have perished and their weapons and telecommunication equipment collected. In the same town of Bab El Oued, a police commissioner and his chauffeur were shot down and their weapons, telecommunications equipment and important documents were collected.

Oued Djare: The Mujahidin have attacked a patrol of the Junta "red beret" paratroopers in the road leading to the city of Medea. Six Junta soldiers were shot down and the rest escaped death saved by their athletic feet. The Junta was quick to send in three military helicopters to the region which started a random bombardment. Three of the Mujahidin have won martyrdom Insha Allah.

Casbah: The Mujahidin have shot down a Junta special force soldier and collected his weapon. In another operation an armed militia related to the Oued Korich center, was killed.

Egypt

Egypt: FBI, CIA Officials Reportedly To Arrive in Cairo

NC2002151596 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 14 Feb 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Officials from the FBI and the CIA will arrive in Cairo in the next few days to exchange information with Egyptian security services on the presence of terrorists of various nationalities in Sudan, including fugitives wanted by Egypt for their involvement in terrorist acts. Egypt has asked the United States to provide it with security information

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following Washington's withdrawal of its diplomats from Khartoum.

The Egyptian-U.S. security talks will deal with information about terrorists in Sudan, their places of residence, their movements, the Sudanese security services' role in protecting them, and the terrorists' future plans. The talks will also deal with creating a mechanism for bilateral cooperation in fighting terrorism in the Arab world and Africa.

Egypt: Perry's Remarks on Israel's Military Superiority Criticized

NC2002171196 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I in Arabic 13 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Delusions That Threaten the Peace Process"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States is supposedly the sponsor of the Middle East peace process and the mediator who is eager to see peace reached by the concerned parties because this is the most important condition and requirement for stability and calm in this region, which occupies a very important place in the U.S. strategic plan due to its location and natural resources.7

The United States has vast interests in the Middle East, which it is trying to protect and its sponsorship of the peace process falls within this context.

This role requires it to act in ways that do not violate or conflict with its objective, as this would cast doubt on the credibility of U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East and negatively affect the situation in the region.

But, regretably, the U.S. Administration violates this rule from time to time. Some of its officials make statements which give the impression that Washington does not read thoroughly or absorb the new situations in the region that it even helped create.

The latest of these statements came from Defense Secretary William Perry, who openly declared a few days ago that the United States is committed to maintaining Israel's qualitative military superiority in the Middle East. He stressed that the United States will double its efforts to protect Israel by continuing the joint efforts to develop the antirocket "Arrow" missile system and by allocating $500 million for that purpose over the next three years.

Such U.S. stands imply a blatant violation of the spirit and essence of the peace process. The qualitative change in the region's political situations during the past few years should supposedly prompt the countries of the region to focus on economic development plans and should supposedly negate the notion of qualitative military superiority—which is the core and essence of the Israeli military creed during war.

But it is evident from Perry's statements that Washington is dealing with Israel as if the latter is still in a state of war with its neighbors and that this necessitates the extension of all possible aid so it can protect itself.

Of course, such statements imply a large measure of falsehood and inconsistency, especially when Washington's pretext is the existence of threats from countries such Iran, Iraq, and Libya who were ridiculously described by Perry as the most dangerous three countries in the world.

Why? Because they possess weapons of mass destruction. Supposing this to be true, then what is Washington's stand on the massive nuclear force which Israel alone possesses in the region and its insistent refusal to join the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, thus disregarding all international norms and laws.

The odd paradox is that on the same day that Perry made these statements, a senior U.S. expert in disarmament affairs was calling on Israel to abandon its nuclear option and stressing that the Israeli nuclear arsenal is a factor of tension, discomfort, and instability in the Middle East.

The expert, Gaday Milholin, who manages a program known as the "The Wisconsin Program" for the removal of weapons of mass destruction worldwide, said that the Israeli nuclear arsenal will remain an element of provocation for its neighbors and adversaries. He also said that Israel's competitors will not abandon attempts to possess similar weapons as long as Israel keeps this nuclear capability.

Therefore, the notion that a state should guarantee to help another country maintain a qualitative military superiority opens the door for more disturbances and disorders in this region whose countries have supposedly chosen peaceful settlement and abandoned military options for solving their conflicts.

This means that the delusion of qualitative military superiority is fundamentally inconsistent with peace because it incites other parties to proceed toward increasing their armaments capability relentlessly, even if this is done at the expense of development plans.

Hence, such U.S. stands are pushing the region toward tension and disturbances and this conflicts with the peace which the United States is sponsoring and mediating to achieve.

There remains another point in Perry's statements that we regard as an extremely serious one, namely cooperation between the United States, Jordan, and other

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countries in the region to bring down Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's regime. This is a blatant interference in the affairs of another country and is not sanctioned by international law. It also opens the way for a sweeping chaos that could prevail in the entire Gulf region and Middle East. Iraq's ethnic, political, and economic conditions have now reached such a degree of fragility and weakness that any foreign interference — even if it is good intentioned — could drown Iraq in a quagmire of fragmentation, splits, and complete collapse at all levels.

This would be a catastrophe for pan-Arab security in general and could cause a similar catastrophe for the parties involved. The possible repercussions might not be controlled, contained, or managed and the region would consequently enter a new stage of disturbances and tension.

Egypt: AL-AKHBAR Criticizes Peres Policy on Talks With Syria

NC2102081696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0614 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Feb (MENA) — The newspaper AL-AKHBAR has criticized Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' policy. The paper said: It seems the Israeli prime minister is looking for excuses to do what he wants to do in his dealings with the Palestinians and Syrians.

The newspaper noted in its editorial today, Wednesday, 21 February, that Peres is exploiting the decision to hold early Israeli elections in order to take certain stands which he knows go against the peace process — a process he started on a positive note.

To prove this point, the newspaper highlighted the decision Shim'on Peres made to prevent visiting foreign ministers from going to the Palestinian Orient House in Jerusalem. The newspaper described this measure as provocative. It said Peres is exercising a right that he does not have.

The newspaper added that Peres is also exploiting the elections race between his party and the Likud Party on the issue of withdrawal from the Syrian Golan Heights. Jewish extremists, supported by the Likud Party, oppose giving the territory back and removing the settlements that were built there. Every now and then, Peres makes new proposals and comes up with ideas he knows the Syrian authorities are not ready to accept or to even consider at all.

Concluding its commentary, the newspaper said that this is the Israeli attitude we have gotten used to in all negotiations with them. Nevertheless, we hope this will change if Israel has honest intentions and desires a permanent and real peace agreement with the Arabs.

Egypt: Egypt Said Watching Eritrean-Israeli Ties

NC2002203596 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 16 Feb 96 p 9

[FBIS Translated Text] High-level diplomatic sources have stated that Egypt is watching developments in relations between Eritrea and Israel. Egypt refuses to accept that these relations should be at the expense of Arab interests or Egypt's national security.

The same sources noted that Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki's visit to Cairo included a discussion of the issue. The sources stressed that the timing of Afwerki's visit to Israel casts further doubt on Eritrean-Israeli relations.

AL-SHA'B has learned that Cairo told the Eritrean president of its rejection of any attempt to drag other parties, particularly Israel, into the crisis with Yemen. Egypt asked the Eritrean president to rule out any escalation in the dispute, to handle the differences politically, and to settle the dispute peacefully. Cairo cautioned against the danger of things worsening in the Red Sea, which is a subject that interests Egypt and the Arabs and affects the security and stability of the region.

According to diplomatic sources, contacts in the past few days have defused the tension in the Yemeni-Eritrean crisis.

Egypt: Eritrea Warned Against Escalating Dispute With Yemen

NC2002213496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2035 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Feb (MENA)—AL-AHRAM warns against Eritrea's inclination to escalate its dispute with Yemen over al-Hanish al-Kabir island. The paper refers in this regard to recent statements by Eritrean official quarters that Eritrea demands not only the al-Hanish al-Kabir island, but considers the island of Jabal Zuqar an Eritrean island as well.

In a commentary to appear in its issue tomorrow, the paper notes that such escalation would not take place without the existence of regional, and even international, powers that are interested in creating tension in this region and ending Arab sovereignty over the gateway to the Red Sea. The paper explains that this leads to a possible Eritrean military escalation in the region, despite the statements reiterating the disputant parties' commitment to a peaceful solution.

The paper calls on Eritrea, which is a newborn state, to discuss its outstanding problems with neighboring

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states in a peaceful manner, without getting involved in conflicts from which the Eritrean people will gain nothing but the squandering of the resources they badly need to improve their living standards. The paper adds that it is in the interest of Eritrea that the Red Sea remain a sea of peace rather than burn with the flames of conflict that will not serve the interests of the Red Sea countries, but may benefit other countries.

Egypt: Weapons, Leaflets Seized From MB After Arrest

NC2002125996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1032 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Feb (MENA) — The Egyptian Interior Ministry announced today that during the security raids on the offices of the disbanded Muslim Brotherhood [MB] in the Cairo, al-Jizah, and al-Fayyum Governorates, the security forces seized the tools for the terrorist scheme that the organization was planning to carry out. The Brotherhood had planned to step up its extremist activity in various governorates and distribute inflammatory leaflets to the citizens while they were performing their 'Id al-Fitr prayers.

The Interior Ministry's statement said that 25 edged weapons, including swords, bayonets, and daggers, were seized, in addition to 21 iron chains and 2,750 ropes to which were tied propaganda posters. One wooden platform equipped with a microphone to be used for making political speeches, 1,280 statements, copies of a "memorandum on the exercise of political rights", and a very large number of inflammatory leaflets containing extremist Brotherhood ideas were also siezed.

The statement said that the arrested MB members made detailed confessions of their criminal roles in the suspicious schemes and their plans to undermine security and stability during the blessed 'Id al-Fitr.

The confessions included references to their storing of illegal printed materials inside the quarters that were raided by the security forces yesterday.

The Interior Ministry's statement added that the following persons were among the leaders of the uncovered MB scheme: 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Ishari Hasan Ghazi, 58, a finance inspector working for al-Azhar schools in al-Fayym; Majdi al-Faruq Anwar Muhammad, 40, an engineer; Muhammad al-Faruq Anwar Muhammad, 34, a merchant; and Ahmad 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Salam Muhammad, 36, an irrigation engineer.

Yesterday State Security personnel arrested 36 MB members involved in the scheme in al-Fayyum and 10 others in Cairo and al-Jizah. All of them had been planning to step up their activity during 'Id al-Fitr.

Egypt: 4 Arrested Brothers Reportedly Linked to 'Abd-al-Rahman

NC2002170696 Paris AFP in English 1440 GMT Feb 20 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Cairo, Feb 20 (AFP) — Four members of the Muslim Brotherhood arrested in a police raid are linked to Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, the blind militant leader jailed for planning bomb attacks in the United States, police said Tuesday [20 February].

The police sweep on Monday resulted in the arrest of a total of 46 Brotherhood followers, 10 from Cairo and neighboring al-Jizah and 36 from al-Fayyum province, 100 kilometers (60 miles) to the south. The sources said four of the arrested in Fayum "worked under cover of the Islamic Revival Association, which was directed by 'Abd-al-Rahman", who was sentenced in January to life in prison in the US for planning bomb attacks.

The blind shaykh is also the spiritual leader of the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah, the leading militant group waging a three-year armed campaign to topple the Egyptian Government. Police sources identified the four as 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Ashri, his son-in-law Majdi al-Faruq Anwar, Muhammed al-Faruq Anwar and Ahmad 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Salam. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Iraq's Return to Arab Ranks, 'Arab Reconciliation' Urged

NC2002190496 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I in Arabic 14 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Toward the Hoped-For Reconciliation"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Finally there are signs that the long-awaited Arab reconciliation, something the Arab world has been missing since the disaster of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait approximately six years ago, is on the horizon.

It would be no exaggeration or untruth to say that Egypt, as always, has taken the lead in efforts to achieve reconciliation. [passage omitted]

The issue of Iraq and its return to the Arab fold is the main obstacle blocking the desired reconciliation. It remains a sensitive issue for countries unable to accept the idea of Iraq's return, chief among them Kuwait, which was devastated by the invasion. While fully appreciating the reasons for this opposition—especially Baghdad's failure to comply with international resolutions and release Kuwaiti prisoners—we call on all Arab countries, including Kuwait, to accept the repeated initiatives by Egypt and United Arab Emirates President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan to end the suffering of the

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Iraqi people, bring Iraq back to the Arab ranks, and categorically reject Iraq's partition. Our reasons for this can be summed up as follows:

1. It has been proved in practice that the sanctions imposed on Baghdad, particularly the economic embargo, only harm the Iraqi people. The ruling regime feels nothing.

2. The return of Iraq, the great Arab country, to the Arab family is a pressing demand at this extremely delicate and sensitive time in which the Arabs are facing enormous international and regional challenges.

3. Several Western countries have called for easing the suffering of the Iraqi people and ending their tragic situation. It would be unreasonable for the West to make this demand while Arab countries reject it.

4. The continuing isolation of Iraq and the tremendous international pressure on it, led by the United States, threatens to raise the idea of partitioning Iraq, something that is totally rejected by the sincere Arab parties, primarily Egypt.

The signs of the hoped-for reconciliation are there. The only thing missing is for everybody to join this bid with full sincerity and desire to serve the interests of this nation. Let 1996 be the year of Arab reconciliation after a long period of strife and fragmentation.

Sudan

Sudan: Al-Mahdi Blames Regime for Economic, Political 'Ruin'

NC2002215196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2055 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 20 Feb (MENA)—Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, former Sudanese prime minister and leader of the al-Ummah Party, has strongly criticized the ruling Sudanese regime, blaming it for the deteriorating political, economic, and security conditions as well as the current isolation that the country suffers from.

In a sermon today marking 'Id al-Fitr that he delivered to more than half a million Sudanese people, the text of which was released here this evening by al-Ummah Party, al-Mahdi noted that Sudan is now going through a predicament that must be overcome. He noted that the National Islamic Front, led by Hasan al-Turabi, has jumped to power and treated its symbols as if they were tyrants or outlaws, leaving the country in an economic and financial ruin that has totally destroyed the national economy.

Al-Mahdi added that the Sudanese regime went even further by encouraging some outlaws against their governments and granting them forged passports, thus ruining Sudan's reputation, particularly in the wake of the assassination attempt against President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June. This has resulted in Sudan's condemnation and opened the door for possible sanctions against it for sponsoring terrorism and having a bad reputation.

Al-Mahdi stressed that all the political forces in Sudan will boycott the elections slated to be held in the country, adding that these elections seek to prepare the country for a continuation of this regime, in terms of its cadres and policies.

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Bahrain

Bahrain: Police, Protesters Clash in Shiite Areas

NC2002195396 Paris AFP in English
1921 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Feb 20 (AFP)—Bahraini anti-riot police clashed Tuesday [20 February] with protesters in Shiite Muslim areas where the authorities had deployed tight security for the end of the Ramadan holy month, witnesses said.

They said there were violent protests in the small Shiite village of Diraz, just west of Manama, and gas canister explosions in Sitra south of the capital.

Dozens of people were arrested in the two villages as well as nearby Diyah, inhabitants told AFP by telephone.

Armoured vehicles packed with policemen have patrolled Diraz and other Shiite villages in the past three days to try to prevent unrest flaring at the start of the 'Id al-Fitr holiday, which marks the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Villagers in Diraz late Monday condemned the mass arrests of mostly Shiite Muslims who are demanding the Sunni Muslim-led government restore the parliament it suspended in 1975. They warned that violence would escalate if the prisoners were not released.

The authorities said at least 261 people have been arrested since a new wave of unrest erupted in late December following a ban on political gatherings at Shiite mosques. The opposition said around 2,000 have been arrested.

Many Shiite Muslims responded to a call by the exiled opposition Bahrain Liberation Movement to boycott the Al-Fitr celebrations, wearing black as a sign of mourning and staying at home.

Dozens of anti-government slogans covered the walls of Shiite Muslim areas. One read "No solution to the political crisis without the restoration of parliament," inhabitants said.

Patrols were also stepped up in traditional shopping areas in the center of Manama and in the sprawling suburb of Budaiya where many foreigners also live.

Rioting first erupted in December 1994 when the authorities arrested a leading Shiite cleric who called for the restoration of parliament. At least 13 people were killed in the first four months of the violence, although no one has been reported killed in the latest unrest.

Bahrain: 4 'Terrorists' Reportedly Arrested for Bombings

NC2002220296 Paris AFP in English
2107 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Manama, Feb 20 (AFP)—Bahraini police have arrested four "terrorists" behind the bombings of two luxury hotels in the capital Manama, the official news agency GNA reported Tuesday [20 February].

It said the four, whom it did not identify, had made "highly significant confessions on the criminal plot they were executing" and the training they had received.

They will be named by police after the interrogations are complete, it added. [passage omitted]

Bahrain: Dailies Question Terrorist Acts Against Citizens

JN2002134796 Manama WAKH in Arabic
1050 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 20 Feb (WAKH) — AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ and AL-AYYAM published here today questioned the terror practiced by the misguided ones against secure citizens and residents in Bahrain.

In its editorial today, AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ says: It is strange and utterly surprising that the misguided ones and those pushed toward perpetrating acts of sabotage and terrorizing secure citizens and residents do not want to convince themselves or realize an important fact that Bahrain owns a highly efficient and strong security body. The paper adds that no tamperer, saboteur, or criminal against the homeland and citizens can slip away from this security body.

The paper was commenting on the announcement regarding the arrest at record time of a terrorist group which bombed the Meridien and Diplomat Hotels. This is thanks to cooperation between citizens and security men who foiled this terrorist group's schemes that were premeditated in the dark to terrorize the secure people in a country that is well known for its stability and security.

The paper concluded its editorial by asking: How could a Muslim amongst us succumb to blackmail from terrorists and perpetrate foolish acts of sabotage against his people and homeland? How could he allow himself to spoil the people's happiness and enjoyment of the 'Id? How could he turn the happiness of the children, kinsfolk, and relatives into a destructive fires and explosions, thus opening the doors of evil and shutting the doors of goodness.

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For its part, AL-AYYAM calls for a genuine stand that expresses loyalty to this homeland and renews the pledge of protecting it from any evil that comes its way, and laying another brick in the edifice of this homeland so it may become loftier and embrace the country's one and harmonious people and so it would stand against efforts to sow fragmentation and hatred.

The paper stresses that rallying around the homeland and entrenching the meanings of love and loyalty should be our priority today, adding: We are sure that the hearts of all the people of this homeland are pure white, full of faith and devoutness, and palpitate with goodness for this country.

The paper concludes by saying: History underscores these shiny stands adopted by our people and their ability to overcome difficulties and obstacles. Today, we are in great need to gain inspiration from these brave stands adopted by our loyal men and to maintain the trust they have empowered in us without relinquishing it at all.

Qatar

Qatar: Ousted Amir, Foreigners Accused of Plotting Failed Coup

NC2102104196 Paris AFP in English 0827 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Doha, Feb 21 (AFP) — Qatar's foreign minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jassim Al Thani on Wednesday [21 February] accused the exiled former amir of masterminding a failed counter-coup against the son who seized power from him last year.

Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, who is living in the United Arab Emirates, ordered Saturday's aborted coup against the new amir, Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, the minister charged.

"Weapons that were smuggled in have been seized as well as subversion plans," Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jassim said in an interview with AFP and the BBC. But he added: "Not one shot was fired."

He said Shaykh Khalifah may also have had the support of Gulf Arab states.

"The first confessions show that the plotters were foreigners. We know the limits of Shaykh Khalifah's team. That's why he needed help from foreigners and we hope the (plotters) don't come from brother countries," he added.

The minister declined to identify the states suspected but political sources who asked not to be named charged that Saudi Arabia and Bahrain were implicated in the plot.

The sources added that at least 40 soldiers and policemen led by their officers were to open fire on the amir's palace as well as the foreign and interior ministries with rocket propelled grenades and automatic rifles.

The soldiers and policemen were then to have taken control of the television and radio station.

Their attack was to have been followed by the deployment of mercenaries, including the former French police captain Paul Barril who has worked as a body guard for Shaykh Khalifah for years, political sources added.

"The mercenaries were to wait for chaos to descend on the country before intervening. We know where they are and unfortunately they are in countries neighboring Qatar," the minister said.

"We are aware of their plot but they can not affect the situation in Qatar," he said.

Shaykh Khalifah, who has been living in Abu Dhabi since December, toured Gulf and other Arab states in December and January to try to drum up support for a return to power.

He was accorded honors in each capital but none gave him public support.

"Some people implicated in the plot have been able to flee to neighboring countries and Qatar will ask for their extradition," the foreign minister said.

Political sources said they had fled to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, two countries which have tense relations with Qatar.

Political sources said Tuesday that 45 soldiers and policemen had been arrested, but two others had managed to flee to Bahrain. The minister declined to say how many suspects had been arrested.

Shaykh Khalifah was overthrown by his son Shaykh Hamad in a bloodless palace coup on June 27 while the former was travelling abroad.

Qatar, a small oil producer in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), is trying to lure foreign investment to develop one of the world's largest gas reserves.

Qatar: Military, Police Said Involved in Trying To Destabilize Security

LD2002185896 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1805 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Doha, 20 Feb (KUNA) — Qatari sources said here today that a group which, according to statements made earlier, has been arrested

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in the State of Qatar is composed of military men of various ranks from the Qatari Army and police.

In a statement to the Kuwaiti news agency, the sources said that the Qatari security authorities uncovered an attempt to destabilize the security of Qatar, planned by a number of military men. The sources did not give any details on the incident or on the party or parties behind the plot, or the ranks or number of military men involved in it. [passage omitted]

KUNA has learned from other sources that some internal security units, such as the police, and some units from the Armed Forces have been recalled.

Doha radio added that al-Hamad general hospital was put on full alert throughout the 'Id al-Fitr holiday and all doctors' leave was cancelled.

Qatar: Minister Cited on 'Plotters,' Says Amir Was Never in Danger

JN2102111496 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 1037 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jabr Bin-Jassim Al Thani, the foreign minister, said that the vile and hostile abortive plot was intended to destabilize the State of Qatar to harm it and sabotage some of its positions. The minister noted that at no time was the life of His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, the beloved amir of the country, in danger.

In an exclusive statement to AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE and the BBC radio and television, the minister said that the suspects in the abortive plot revealed serious facts and that there were non-Qatari elements involved.

Answering a question on who carried out the abortive plot, the minister said that their number is not great and that many of them were misled. However, the majority of them are now under arrest, he noted, adding that they made serious confessions. Some smuggled weapons were confiscated, he said.

Regarding the nationalities of the plotters, his excellency said: I do not want to talk about nationalities yet because this might affect the investigation.

Qatar: Gulf Council Meeting Requested To Discuss 'Vile Plot'

JN2002171896 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 1700 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source at the Foreign Ministry said the State of Qatar will call for an urgent meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council in order to brief the member states on the implications of the abortive vile plot that sought to undermine security and stability in the State of Qatar.

Qatar: 'Extensive Consultations' Reported on GCC Meeting

JN2102133496 Muscat Radio Oman Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Citing sources close to the Omani Foreign Ministry in Muscat today, the OMANI NEWS AGENCY says that extensive consultations are currently being held among the foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states to hold an emergency meeting of the GCC ministerial council. This comes at the request of the State of Qatar, a GCC member, to express solidarity with the State of Qatar in safeguarding its security and territorial integrity against any external interference.

The agency added that the meeting is expected to be held after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday [around 24 February] because a number of the GCC foreign ministers are currently outside of their countries.

Qatar: GCC Secretary General Condemns Sabotage Attempt

JN2102103196 Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates Radio Network in Arabic 0940 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Fahim Bin-Sultan al-Qasimi, secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], condemned the sabotage attempt by a group of saboteurs with the aim of undermining security and stability in the State of Qatar, which is a GCC member. He denounced these acts of sabotage and destruction, which only serve the objectives of the covetous ones to undermine the gains and cultural accomplishments in this important region.

In statements to the EMIRATES NEWS AGENCY, al-Qasimi said that all GCC states support the State of Qatar in its stand against such attempts proceeding from the principle that the security of the GCC states is an integrated whole.

The secretary general expressed his confidence in the wisdom and awareness of the supreme leadership in the State of Qatar in tackling such issues, which will not affect the Qatari people's cohesion and stand in support of their wise leadership.

Al-Qasimi called for more coordination among GCC states in implementation of the 16th GCC summit held in Muscat in a way that reinforces security and stability in the region.

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Qatar: Amir Receives Ruling Family Members, Explains 'Conspiracy'

JN2102091496 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 0900 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, the beloved amir of the country, received at the amiri court this morning members of the esteemed ruling family. His highness explained to the esteemed members of the ruling family details of the vile conspiracy to undermine security and stability in the country.

Qatar: Foreign Minister Reassures Omani Minister on Situation

JN2002172696 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 1700 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani, minister of foreign affairs, today received a telephone call from Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, minister of state for foreign affairs in the sisterly Sultanate of Oman. During the contact, the Omani minister was reassured about the situation in the country in the wake of the abortive vile attempt to undermine security and stability in the country.

Qatar: Yemeni President Contacts Amir, Voices Support

JN2002183296 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 1800 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, the beloved amir of the country, this evening received a telephone call from his brother 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the sisterly Republic of Yemen. The Yemeni president stressed to his brother the beloved amir that Yemen—leadership and people—stands by the side of the State of Qatar against any attempt to harm its security and stability.

Qatar: Minister Denies Emergency Declared at Hamad Hospital

JN2002204796 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic, 2000 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Public Health Minister 'Ali Sa'id al-Khayarin has denied reports that a state of emergency was declared at the Hamad Hospital.

Responding to reports in this regard, the minister told the QATARI NEWS AGENCY that work in the emergencies department of the Hamad Hospital is proceeding normally as scheduled during public holidays. He said there are no extraordinary manifestations and the programs and working hours of the emergencies department in the Hamad Hospital published in the press today are usually released due to the closure of medical centers on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr.

United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates: Daily—Saddam Fooled World Over Defections

NC2102105596 Paris AFP in English 0927 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, Feb 21 (AFP) — Iraqi President Saddam Husayn fooled the world into thinking his son-in-law had defected when in fact he was sent to gather intelligence about the opposition, a newspaper said here Wednesday [21 February].

The return of General Husayn Kamil Hasan, his brother Colonel Saddam Husayn and their wives to Baghdad on Tuesday signalled the end of the mission to probe the capabilities of the opposition seeking to oust the Iraqi leader, AL-BAYAN newspaper said.

"Saddam Husayn, if he enters into an international film competition, deserves the prize of the best actor," the Arabic language daily in the United Arab Emirates said.

"The members of his regime deserve the prize of the best support actors while the Iraqi and Arab people deserve the prize of the worst audience."

Husayn, Saddam's son-in-law, returned to Iraq on Tuesday with Saddam's permission after a six-month bizarre exile in Jordan, during which he vowed to topple the Iraqi president.

"Who can believe Hasan, his brother and Saddam's two daughters return to Iraq so easily in a surprise move similar to their escape to Jordan," AL-BAYAN said.

"Those who believe it will find only one logical explanation... that such a political event is a mere play or a chapter in the Iraqi tragic-comic game.

"The slogans raised by Hasan, including toppling Saddam, are a serious crime in Iraq that deserve all types of torture if such a return had not been arranged in advance as was the case in his escape ... Hasan's mission is over and we will soon know if it succeeded or failed."

The US State Department spokesman Nick Burns on Tuesday described Washington's reaction to the news as "stunned disbelief."

"I don't think anyone is thinking that this was some kind of grand plot by Saddam," he said, adding the Iraqi president was not in a position to fool the West.

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Yemen

Yemen: President Salih Addresses People on 'Id al-Fitr

JN1902203596 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 19 Feb 96

["Text" of speech by Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih to the Yemeni people on the advent of 'id al-Fitr, on 19 February — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate. Brother citizens, may God's peace and blessings be upon you. It has become customary for me to address you on this occasion every year. It is my pleasure to begin this speech by sending you and all Muslims throughout the whole world the warmest wishes on the advent of the blessed 'Id al-Fitr. [passage omitted]

Brothers, our country, which has always been keen to develop fraternal and friendly relations with all its brothers and friends—relations based on mutual respect, fruitful cooperation, and non-interference in the internal affairs of any country—has made many achievements in this respect to serve the common interests and mutual benefits. In this context, our country has been seeking to settle all outstanding border problems with its neighbors via peaceful means and dialogue and in a manner that will bolster peace and security in the region. Proceeding from this principle, our country has dealt with the developments of the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir island with extreme calm, patience, and wisdom. It has responded favorably to all mediation efforts and good offices that were made to work out a peaceful settlement to the differences between our country and Eritrea in accordance with the maritime law and international law and through resorting to international arbitration.

The Republic of Yemen will continue to adhere to the peaceful option out of appreciation for its responsibility toward the international community in staving off any problems or tension in the Red Sea region that would threaten security, stability, and international navigation therein. Regardless of how long the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir island, against which aggression was launched, will remain under the Eritrean occupation, the fact that this island was occupied through the use of force will never cancel our right to its possession and to sovereignty over it. All historical and legal documents and evidence confirm the island's well-established Yemeni identity. We are confident that the civilized world will not accept to reward the aggressor or acknowledge the occupation of others' land through force.

Regarding our relations with our brothers and neighbors in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we would like to express our deep satisfaction with the progress made on the level of these intimate fraternal relations, particularly after the signing of the memorandum of understanding on 27 Ramadan 1995. The joint committees, formed according to the memorandum, made significant progress in their work and fulfilled their tasks. Meetings were held between officials from the two fraternal and neighborly countries. A meeting was held between myself and my brother King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, in Jeddah. I also met recently in Mecca with my brothers Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz while we performed minor pilgrimage this year. There is no doubt that the good results of these fraternal meetings are in the interest of the fraternal and neighborly peoples. They will also boost fraternal and good-neighborly relations and bilateral cooperation in a manner that will meet their common aspirations for progress and prosperity and enhance security, stability, and peace in the peninsula and the region in general.

Our country, will continue to adhere to its approach based on furthering Arab solidarity and all types of cooperation with its Arab brethren. On this occasion, we call once again for effecting Arab solidarity along clear and well-established foundations that will ensure that such solidarity will persist and will not collapse. This solidarity will provide our Arab nation with further elements of strength and impregnability so that it will be capable of facing the challenges posed by the new era.

I would like to thank all the friends who contribute to our development process. We particularly thank the donor countries which took part in The Hague conference in the Netherlands for the support they have extended to the economic, financial, and administrative reform program and development in our country.

Finally, I would like to send my warmest congratulations to the personnel of the Armed Forces and security forces who are positioned on the mountains, plains, valleys, and territorial waters — who watch over the security of the homeland and people. I express my deep appreciation for them as they endure hardships while performing their national duty with faithfulness and high caliber. One again I congratulate you on the blessed 'Id. I implore God the Almighty to protect Yemen, the Arab and Islamic nation, and the whole world from all evils and seditions. May God's mercy be upon the souls of our martyrs. God is all hearing. I wish you many happy returns of the occasion. May God's peace and blessings be upon you.

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Yemen: al-Iryani Discusses Eritrea Dispute With Ambassadors

JN1902193696 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, today received the ambassadors of the five permanent member states of the UN Security Council.

The ambassadors are French Ambassador (Marcel Logelle), U.S. Ambassador David Newton, Russian Federation Ambassador (Nikolai Mikhaylovich Gebebekov), British Ambassador Douglas Gordon, and Chinese Ambassador (Piochen Che).

Al-Irayni then received Saudi Ambassador 'Ali Muhammad al-Qutaybi, who is the dean of the Arab and foreign diplomatic corps in Sanaa, and Egyptian Ambassador 'Adil Subhi.

He discussed with them separately latest developments of the French Government's efforts to reach a political solution and international arbitration on the dispute between our country and Eritrea as a result of its treacherous aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir island.

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Iraq: Baghdad 'Willing To Discuss Everything' at Oil-for-Food Talks

MM2102140296 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Raghidah Dirgham: "Iraq Conveys to United Nations Its Readiness To Do Anything for Implementation of Resolution 986"]

[FBIS Translated Text] New York — The Iraqi Government has accepted the UN General Secretariat's request for discussion of all issues related to the implementation of the "oil for food" formula stipulated in Security Council Resolution 986. The Iraqi negotiating delegation told the General Secretariat that it was willing to discuss everything and wished to speed up the talks, and that it intended to remain in New York to complete the talks instead of stopping and going to Baghdad and then discussing the oil and banking aspects pertaining to the sale of $1 billion worth of Iraqi oil every 90 days.

The two sides have reached an understanding on the questions of distribution of oil royalties and international control of the distribution, and they discussed a "memorandum of understanding" noting the points of agreement, to be endorsed after completion of the discussion of implementation of all aspects of the "oil for food" formula.

The talks, which have for a whole week been confined to the General Secretariat and the Iraqi delegation, have indirectly shifted to the Security Council through Ambassador 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, and Hans Corell, head of the General Secretariat's delegation and head of the legal department. Some circles have warned against the adverse effects of the positive points and achievements in the talks if portrayed by the Iraqi side as a victory against the United States.

The day before yesterday [13 February] al-Anbari met in the evening with the ambassadors of the nonaligned member states of the Security Council as well as the Chinese ambassador to convey the Iraqi position to them. Some sources say that al-Anbari sought to demonstrate that "Iraq is serious about cooperation, does not want to amend any resolution, wants to implement the oil for food formula, is not trying to waste time, and wants to expedite the talks with a view to reaching agreement on practical measures for the implementation of the formula."

Madeleine Albright, the American chairman of the Security Council, asked the General Secretariat to inform all security Council members of developments in the talks with Iraq, especially after al-Anbari informed some members of the proceedings at the talks. It was decided that Hans Corell would do so in a closed session which was held yesterday evening. Informed sources stressed that Corell would "concentrate on the main topics and would not go into details of the talks until they become clear."

AL-HAYAH has learned that the General Secretariat has given the Iraqi delegation some papers related to the "memorandum of understanding" regarding measures for control of the distribution of $130-150 million of oil royalties to the Kurds in northern Iraq. This particular memorandum of understanding stems from a "memorandum of understanding" reached between the United Nations and Iraq in 1993 under which some 500 UN guards were deployed to accompany the humanitarian supply convoys in the north. That number was later reduced to 150 guards.

The new memorandum is similar to that memorandum of understanding with some modification of figures and tasks. It gives the United Nations the necessary flexibility in the distribution of royalties, especially the medical and other equipment which requires greater control. The Iraqi side was expected to propose amendments to the memorandum of understanding that were supposed to be limited and acceptable to the General Secretariat.

Verbal agreement was reached at Monday's session on details of distribution and control, on the basis that the Iraqi Government would hand the food, medicines, and medical equipment to agents throughout the country under international supervision, including in Mosul and Karkuk, then UN representatives would accompany the agents to the northern areas such as Dahuk, Irbil, and al-Sulaymaniyah where the Iraqi authorities have no presence, and they would exercise their control as they wish.

As regards the rest of Iraq, the supervision and control would not go beyond the agents and the stores, and the UN observers will not accompany the agents and distributors as in the north.

The understanding on the details of distribution and control seeks to eliminate one of the main obstacles standing in the way of agreement between the General Secretariat and Iraq. Baghdad's agreement to discuss oil and banking details in the current session is something akin to a breakthrough in the talks. Baghdad had wanted to divide the New York talks into two parts, one confined to issues of distribution and control after which the negotiators would go back to Baghdad for an assessment of the situation before the second round on oil and banking issues.

The Iraqi side believes that there are no major problems regarding matters pertaining to the oil and banking aspects and that these issues are the easier part of

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the talks compared with the issues of distribution and control.

If the talks continue at an average of two sessions a day, an understanding and agreement within one or two weeks would not be unlikely unless the talks stumble over technical details or political decisions.

The later sessions are expected to cover the pumping of Iraqi oil through the dual pipelines which pass through Turkish territory and which the Turkish side said were ready for oil pumping. Al-Anbari has confirmed that Baghdad is not opposed to the pumping of oil through these pipelines in the framework of Iraqi-Turkish relations without the interference in these relations of the Security Council as a directly interested party.

With the extension of the circle of talks between the Iraqi delegation and the General Secretariat to the Security Council through notification of its members about developments in the talks, sources on both sides do not rule out political surprises by some council members.

Some international circles have noted the statements made the day before yesterday at the United Nations by Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq in which he emphasized his government's opposition to the easing of sanctions against Iraq, even in the form of the oil for food formula as mentioned in Resolution 986. These statements surprised more than one party because the Israeli position was made publicly clear. Albright, as Security Council chairman, was forced to comment on them stressing that she was speaking not as the U.S. ambassador but as chairman of the council. She said that "Resolution 986 was drafted carefully and it reflected the Security Council's concern regarding the (humanitarian) needs in Iraq. The council members believe that the (resolution) was drafted in a way that would (ensure) that the oil royalties reach the right destinations."

Meanwhile, the Iraqi Government has invited Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, head of the special commission for the elimination of prohibited weapons, to visit Baghdad at the end of this month or early next month for talks before the release of the report to be prepared by the commission for announcement in April.

Ekeus is now in Washington. The day before yesterday he received Baraq at the latter's request. That was the first public meeting between the two.

Iraq: Talks Stalled on Northern Issue, Oil Costs

MM2102113896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 19 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Raghidah Dirgham: "Crisis in Negotiations With Iraq; Kurds 'Complex' and Oil Production Costs"]

[FBIS Translated Text] New York — There has been a crisis in the talks between the UN general secretariat and the Iraqi delegation on the "oil for food" formula. The talks almost collapsed for two main reasons: How to transfer $130-150 million to the Kurds in northern Iraq to be taken from the proceeds of the sale of $2 billion worth of Iraqi oil over a period of six months, and, secondly, deduction of the oil production costs, averaging $2 per barrel, from the price.

The main disputed points were recorded in brackets in the draft of the "memorandum of understanding" between the two sides, a matter which threatened the collapse of the New York talks without agreement on the technical issues that would have taken the talks to the political level as had been expected. Sources close to the general secretariat, however, have played down the tone of pessimism and expressed hope of overcoming the difficulties.

The question of allocating $130-150 million for the three Kurdish governorates (Dahuk, Irbil, and al-Sulaymaniyah) emerged as a major obstacle in the way of agreement. The cause of the disagreement was not the allocation of that sum but rather the way of transferring it.

Some Western states have moved over the past few days to express opposition to the understanding that the allocation of that sum would be within the prerogatives of the Iraqi Government and in the context of the comprehensive plan the government submits to the general secretariat. Western diplomats have cast doubt on the possibility that the general secretariat's chief delegate Hans Corell would accept a formula under which the Iraqi Government would specify the material items (food, medicines, and medical supplies) for the northern governorates that would be delivered to agents in Mosul and Karkuk under UN supervision with international observers controlling their distribution in the north. These diplomats insist that the sums allocated for the northern governorates should be separated from the Iraqi Government's powers by deducting the sums in cash from the oil royalties and depositing them in the guarantee account [hisab al-daman] to be at the disposal of the humanitarian program of the UN agencies in northern Iraq.

The Iraqi delegation and the general secretariat's delegation had discussed an understanding on a formula

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under which the Iraqi Government would deduct the proportion earmarked for the north in the form of material goods, not cash, separately. In the Iraqi delegation's view, the position taken by the general secretariat's delegation at the past two days' sessions constituted a "retreat" from what had been agreed upon, but the general secretariat's view was that the understanding was in the context of "ideas" pending "comprehensive" agreement on all the details.

According to general secretariat sources, discussions are now focusing on "some way" of reconciling the Iraqi interpretation of Article 8 of Resolution 986 and the interpretation of the Western states, especially the United States and Britain, of that article. These states believe that Resolution 986 stipulates that the [Kurds'] share should be taken in cash and placed at the disposal of international agencies which would be the party to purchase the necessary goods. A Western diplomat told AL-HAYAH: "We oppose the partition of Iraq but we do not want to enable the central government to regain control of the three (Kurdish) governorates on which it had imposed an economic blockade thus forfeiting its responsibilities there." He pointed out that Resolution 986 deliberately divided Article 8 into Section A and Section B and listed the details pertaining to the northern governorates under Section B because of the "exceptional" circumstances of the Kurdish areas.

The Iraqi side believes that the purpose of that article was to ensure justice and fair distribution through the allocation of $130-150 million for the north, and it believes that a compromise solution would be one under which Baghdad would agree to the deduction of that sum but in the context of the comprehensive plan subject to an understanding of the Iraqi Government's sovereignty, not in a separate way that would separate the north from the central government.

The Iraqi side believes that agreement by it to a separation of the northern governorates would be tantamount to "a perpetuation of the exceptional situation" undermining Iraqi sovereignty and carrying the seeds of partition of Iraq, and an attempt to confirm the separation of the north.

The general secretariat, however, is looking for a "way" to reconcile the two interpretations in a manner that would underscore Iraqi sovereignty and "territorial integrity," which Resolution 986 confirms in its preamble, without leaving room for the Security Council to abort the entire agreement if it decided that the understanding would be a violation of the letter of the resolution.

Some ideas discussed by the general secretariat and the Iraqi side before the negotiations began included a British idea under which the Iraqi Government would address a letter to the secretary general requesting the allocation of $130-150 million for the northern governorates with emphasis on Iraqi territorial integrity. Such a request by the Iraqi Government in an official letter to the secretary general would be a confirmation that the deduction would be in the context of the Iraqi Government's approval and with it acting on the basis of its sovereignty over all the Iraqi territory. It is not known whether the Iraqi leadership considers its position on the question of the north a "red line" that cannot be crossed or whether it is prepared to accepted the British formula or some other way of reconciling the positions.

Although financial matters pertaining to oil production costs emerged as a main obstacle in the way of agreement, these matters are less of a threat to the talks than the issue of the north. The Iraqi side wants to keep the oil production costs, which average $2 per barrel, inside Iraq and believes that anything else would mean including the costs in the price. The general secretariat believes that this matter should not be considered at all because there is no provision for it in the resolution. A draft "memorandum of understanding" is expected to be completed today to be submitted to Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali and the leadership in Baghdad, but that depends on the results of the meetings held in New York yesterday in an atmosphere oscillating between optimism and pessimism, and on the political decision from Baghdad. Ambassador 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, yesterday expressed the belief that the talks would end today. AP quoted him as saying that he was not sure if the two sides would set a date for a new round of talks.

Iraq: Ekeus Discusses Resolution 986

NC2002203296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Khalil Matar from New York]

[FBIS Translated Text] Rolf Ekeus, head of the Special UN Commission on dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, has stated that closing the file on these weapons, which will pave the way for lifting the oil embargo and the other sanctions against Iraq, requires a personal decision by Iraqi President Saddam Husayn to reveal the information Ekeus' commission seeks. He reiterated that the Iraqi Government would rather not reveal its banned armament programs than lift the sanctions on its people. He said the Security Council resolutions allowed Iraq to retain "enough to defend its territorial integrity."

In an interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, while his Swedish colleague and UN legal adviser Hans Correl [name as published] was negotiating with an Iraqi

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delegation over Resolution 986, Ekeus said: "If we are clear about the armament issue, this clarity becomes very important regarding the issue of Iraq's peaceful intentions. This analysis could help toward lifting the sanctions. But for us to ask if this is enough, that is beyond the jurisdiction of the commission."

Ekeus said he takes Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's speech on Iraqi Army day last month "very seriously" but noted: "We have heard statements and remarks by Iraqi officials. We view all this positively and with optimism. We are trying to evaluate this talk but it is not decisive talk."

Ekeus said: "The only way to obtain this decisive talk is for it to come to us from the top (i.e. from the Iraqi president himself.) The time has come for him to participate personally in what is happening."

Recalling that during the past 15 years Iraq has dealt with four UN officials—all Swedish, from Olaf Palme through Yan Elisson during the Iraq-Iran war, Ekeus, and now Correl—Ekeus jokingly noted that this perhaps shows that the Swedes alone will save Iraq from its problems.

We asked Ekeus: "Why did the Iraqis invite you to Baghdad?" He said: "I think they want to complete their analysis of the situation, by obtaining our assessment of the armament aspects and how this is related to Resolution 986, so that they can draw a clear picture of what is coming. I do not believe that the time is suitable for my visit now, because I do not want it to be linked to the ongoing negotiations on Resolution 986. Therefore, my deputy Charles Duever [name as published] will go at the beginning of next month. But if there is still a need for me to visit, I may do so before presenting the April report to the Security Council."

We asked the UN official about reports that what is happening regarding Resolution 986 is related to Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 and his work, reminding him of his words in the summer of 1993 that Iraq's acceptance of Resolution 715 meant it would be able to export oil in six months. He declined to give clear answers and added: "You have to remember that the situation was tense and military strikes were about to occur. At that time, we wanted to contain our problems with Iraq and contain the coalition's thinking on a military strike against Iraq. During the talks held with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz, which were very intensive, we reached a new policy that radically ended the obstacles placed before our work. Since that time, no serious obstacles have occurred. This developed into Iraq's official acceptance of Resolution 715. After that, we did extensive work and placed the monitoring system."

We asked him: "Do you think today that Iraq, as it says, will be able to get 3 months of Resolution 986 then get the sanctions lifted in full?" He answered: "We are satisfied with the monitoring system. What we want now is to make sure that there are no secrets. But the important thing is the role of the Security Council. We will not present the positive report (on Iraq's complete implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687) before knowing what is truly happening regarding Iraqi armament. Perhaps some Security Council members want to look from another perspective, such as the humanitarian aspect, or want to believe Iraq's peaceful intentions. I think that if we become clear about the armament issue, it will be very important with respect to Iraq's peaceful intentions and this could help the analysis in that direction. But to ask if this is enough is outside the commission's jurisdiction."

Regarding his remarks that Iraq would rather keep its army than sacrifice it in return for lifting the sanctions, the UN official said: "I said that Resolution 687 could be implemented. But Iraq opted for a different policy. They believe they can obtain the implementation of Paragraph 22 and keep some of the banned weapons. I hope they have learned and changed. The Iraqi Government undoubtedly knows very well what it still has to do. They do not want to sacrifice but sacrifice is necessary. They must reveal the banned weapons and present some of the things they are still hiding that they consider to be of value to them. I see no security fears in this. Iraq will still have enough resources to defend the sanctity of its territories politically and militarily. They will be capable of defending their country from regional dangers through traditional military capabilities. Therefore I believe the sacrifice is possible without subjecting their unity and the stability of the region to any danger."

He added: "Iraq has lost around $50 billion annually but has not lost in the strategic sense, because oil remains underground. It has only lost the ability to use the revenue in recent years. We must look at the importance Iraq gives to these issues. The issue is one of options and abilities resulting from this resource. This is the response to the question on why they are not abandoning these weapons. Every country has security concerns. Sweden has security concerns and for Iraq to have security concerns is legitimate. We respect these concerns and even support them. But my point is that they are not making use of [usakhkhirun] legitimate defense capabilities with us [as published]. They know what they have, what they should do, and what they should present. We are waiting for the final and complete lists. A delay might be good because they want to present good work."

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What Ekeus is discussing are the lists Iraq has been asked to present about its missile, biological, and chemical armaments, lists that reveal the former programs and all their details. Iraq presented some of these lists several months ago but Ekeus rejected them saying they were incomplete and lacked information. Baghdad has not presented any of them since then.

We asked him: "How would you describe their cooperation during the past few months?" He said: "In order to give a good answer, we have to wait and see what they present. We do not want to rush them. We prefer that they take their time and present good and complete lists and not hasty ones. Therefore, we hope that they act in a suitable way. What we hope for is to get these lists before we present our report to the Security Council in April."

As to the general Iraqi behavior with him, he said: "It is good on the technical level. When it comes to substance, as we call it, there is a steady flow of incoming information. But there are questions to which they have not yet replied. It appears that the Iraqi president's statement on Army Day had an influence on the citizens when dealing with us. At the political level, there is talk of cooperation, but when we come to the practical level we find caution and hindering. But there is progress and we have the great task of making progress."

When asked about his reason for meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, Ekeus said: "He is the foreign minister of a country in the region which is seriously affected by what is happening. He wanted to talk to us and to know what we are doing. My meeting with him was similar to my meetings with all the concerned officials in the region and outside it."

Finally we asked him: "If the Iraqis cooperate with you fully, how much time will you need to say that they have implemented Paragraph 22?"

Ekeus here replied cautiously by saying: "This is a very serious question. The Council said that it expects this to happen within 60 days. I do not want to reply and create problems and confusion. No, I do not want to answer this question. It brings me problems."

Iraq: UN Secretary General Said Satisfied With Outcome of Talks

JN2002192296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1740 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 20 Feb (INA)—UN Secretary General Butrus Ghali has expressed his complete satisfaction with the outcome of the technical talks between Iraq and the United Nations.

Official Spokeswoman Sylvana Foa said on Tuesday that the secretary general believes the nonofficial "working paper," prepared by the two sides is "a positive step forward," and that he is very satisfied with the progress in the talks.

She added that Hans Corell, legal adviser to the UN secretary general and head of the UN delegation, on Sunday and Monday gave the secretary general a thorough briefing on the outcome of the talks, and that he will give another briefing later today, Tuesday.

Iraq: Al-Mukhtar Says Success of Dialogue 'Matter of Time'

JN2102132096 Baghdad INA in English 1230 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 21, INA—An Iraqi daily has warned speculators not to delude themselves into believing that withholding goods and stopping buying and selling pending the outcome of the dialogue between Iraq and the UN would be a successful and effective tactic.

In an editorial on Wednesday [21 February], editor-in-chief of AL-JUMHURIYAH Salah al-Mukhtar said the dialogue will continue until success is achieved and that the government will continue to pump goods into the market at lower prices.

Let members of the public not forget, even for one moment, that the government now has guarantees, reserve, alternatives and plans, based on president Husayn's letter to the cabinet on 2 December, 1995, to handle any harmful case that appears as a result of greediness and speculation, said al-Mukhtar.

Accordingly, the only loser in any attempt to push prices up will be speculators because the government is strong, both financially and economically, said AL-JUMHURIYAH editor, adding that speculators are no longer capable of dictating prices and that the Iraqi market is no longer a toy in the hands of the greedy.

Al-Mukhtar said the success of the dialogue with the UN is a matter of time, and it is better for those stocking goods to offer their goods for sale now or they will find themselves with no option but to sell for pennies.

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Iraq: Western Sources Cited on Oil-for-Food Talks

MM2102125196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 17 Feb 96 pp 1,6

[Report by Raghidah Dirgham in New York: "Western States Opposed to Iraq Regaining Control Over Northern Provinces"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Talks between the United Nations and Iraq over implementing the principle of "oil for food" as stated by Resolution 986, have entered a "blackout" period over the weekend and until Tuesday [20 February]. Hopefully, the round of technical talks will be completed on Monday and an agreement reached on the "memorandum of understanding" which will depend on the political agreement by both Iraq and the [UN] General Secretariat.

A Western diplomatic source has told AL-HAYAH that despite the Western states' keenness on safeguarding Iraq's unity and sovereignty, these states are opposed to the Iraqi central government regaining control over the three northern provinces.

Oil and finance experts returned to New York after the Iraqi side agreed to consider all aspects with regard to Iraq selling $1 billion worth of oil every 90 days to satisfy its pressing humanitarian needs. The recent sessions focused on the oil and financial aspects after frameworks for understanding were laid down with regard to international monitoring and the distribution of food, medicine, and other medical supplies all over the country.

Western diplomats said that they still have doubts about the General Secretariat and Iraq reaching an agreement on a way to implement Resolution 986 "until we can see an official document agreed by both sides." They believe that the fact that the talks have gone on uninterrupted for two weeks is "a very good thing, reflecting the seriousness of the talks," but "we have not had any real indications that there is an agreement, and it is difficult to give an assessment, in view of the fact that the information from the Iraqi side...was misleading...and unbalanced.... We fear that this may not be the true picture of the talks."

More than one source mentioned that the two sides have reached an agreement over monitoring the distribution of food, medicine, and medical supplies, whereby the Iraqi Government would distribute these goods to agents under the supervision of the international monitors in the warehouses. This includes the allocation of $130-150 million of food and medicine to the Kurds in the north, in accordance with Resolution 986, which would be handed over to agents in Mosul and Karkuk in the presence of the United Nations. For its part, the United Nations would perform any necessary task with regard to distributing the goods in the three northern provinces through its agencies, guards, or observers.

However, the Western states, the United States and Britain especially, have a different interpretation of the article concerning the distribution and who should be in charge of purchasing the goods for the north from the understanding reached.

According to a Western diplomat's interpretation of Article 8 of Resolution 986, Section B, the UN secretary general deducts from the account the financial revenue earmarked for the north and allocates it to the UN agencies in charge of the humanitarian program in the north. The Western diplomat added that "our interpretation is that the secretary general hands over the funds and makes them available to these international agencies, and the agencies are responsible for making the necessary purchases" to satisfy the needs of the Kurds in the three northern provinces.

The Western diplomat stressed the Western states' keenness to safeguard "Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity," saying: "We oppose the partitioning of Iraq, but we do not want to enable the central government to regain control of the three governorates on which the government had imposed the economic blockade thus forfeiting its responsibilities there."

He added: "We would not be happy with the idea of the (central government) regaining its responsibilities and powers by sending food, medicine, and medical supplies to the north."

With regard to Western interpretation of another sensitive point in the talks, namely the pumping the major part of the oil through Turkish-Iraqi pipelines, the Western diplomat said: "We have no problems if the Iraqis want to resolve this issue and reach an understanding with the Turkish side. What is important is that Resolution 986 stresses the presence of independent observers to ensure that more than half the quantity of oil is actually being pumped through these pipelines." He said that the Western side has no problem considering the issue a "bilateral" issue between the two countries, on condition that independent investigators, probably from Norway, are present. Their task is to make sure that more than 50 percent is pumped through the Turkish pipeline.

The General Secretariat and the Iraqi delegation are working toward finding an appropriate formula for the issue of pumping oil through the Turkish pipeline, which would be in line with the conditions stated in Resolution 986 and take into consideration Iraqi reservations with regard to sovereignty.

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UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali is expected to receive on Sunday or Monday from his experts and legal adviser Hans Corell the "memorandum of understanding" in the light of which he will decide whether it constitutes the qualitative move and the framework required to shift the talks to the political level, presumably to the level of Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz in New York.

Negotiator 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, the Iraqi delegation's chief, will leave New York to travel to Baghdad the day after tomorrow, Monday [19 February], to inform his government of the outcome of the technical round of the talks.

Iraq: INA Rounds Up Dialogue With United Nations

JN2002210796 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1905 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 20 Feb (INA)—Delegations from Iraq and the United Nations on Monday concluded sessions of technical dialogue and exchanged a "nonofficial working paper" related to all aspects of the exchange of oil for food, medicine, and the basic needs of the Iraqi people.

The Iraqi delegation to the dialogue, which started on 6 February, comprised representatives of the Health, Trade, Industry and Minerals, and Oil Ministries and the Iraq Central Bank, and was headed by Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir Al-Anbari. The UN delegation, which comprised a number of senior officials and experts, was headed by Hans Corell, UN assistant secretary general for legal affairs.

The two delegations held 15 official working sessions between 6 and 19 February. Members of the two delegations also held a number of side sessions and the two heads of delegations — Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari and Hans Corell — met privately. During these meetings, the two delegations discussed all aspects related to the topic amid an atmosphere of mutual praise for the cooperation and efforts made by both sides during the talks, which were described as "very important and dominated by an atmosphere of professionalism and positive attitude."

The INA correspondent in New York reported that in their final official session yesterday, which lasted three hours, the two delegations studied in detail the issue of oil in exchange for food, medicine, and basic needs. The session focused on reviewing everything discussed during the various sessions of the dialogue, particularly trade affairs, foodstuffs and their distribution through Trade Ministry agents, health affairs, medicine, oil production and marketing, and relevant financial affairs.

In a briefing to journalists following the conclusion of the session and before he and his delegation left for Baghdad, 'Abd-al- Amir al-Anbari said the talks "were technical and positive and focused on food, medicine, and oil issues."

He said: The two sides were able to study the subjects that were discussed previously. He said he hopes another round of talks will be held in the future.

He added: The two sides discussed all subjects in order to arrive at an agreement. They sought to arrive at a very clear common understanding in order to arrive at an agreement.

For his part, UN Delegation Head Hans Corell said at a news conference that the talks were calm and natural just as any other talks of this kind. He added that the two delegations discussed very detailed issues in the field of oil production and marketing. He said that they also discussed the issue of a bank account, buying and shipping food and medicines, bank transfers related to marketing oil, and the purchase and distribution of foods and medicines. Corell said that the talks were held in a technical and positive atmosphere, and that he will submit his report to the UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus- Ghali on the results of the talks which are the fruit of the technical dialogue held between the two parties.

Corell said that he will brief Ambassador Ethel, [name as transliterated], head of the UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee on the results of the technical talks.

He said: What we had discussed was included in a working paper and that we carried out what the two delegations had to do. He said: The responsibility of the two delegations was to define the basis for the issues we had to pinpoint.

Commenting on the results of the first round of talks, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz told INA today that the two delegations will present what was accomplished and what was not accomplished to their administrations. He said that the Iraqi delegation will submit its report to the Iraqi leadership after the 'Id al-Fitr holidays [20-23 February]) while the UN delegation will submit its report in this respect to UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali.

Tariq 'Aziz said that after the two sides study the results of this round of technical talks Iraq and the secretary general will hold consultations on the date and method for resuming the talks.

He added that this might take place in March. Tariq 'Aziz explained that the talks were technical and were

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held in a calm and business-like manner, that the two sides exchanged views on a broad and detailed level to reach a common understanding on all aspects and that all this confirms that the talks were positive.

On the other hand, Iraqi delegation sources told the INA correspondent in New York that the nonofficial paper they had worked out deals with a host of technical matters which should be finalized to lay the basis for tackling the issue in the forthcoming stage of the dialogue.

INA has also learned from the two delegations' sources that they worked hard to prepare this basis and that their discussions were frank and conducted with open minds.

Iraq had said it accepts UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus- Ghali' invitation for a dialogue with the UN general secretariat on the issue of oil in exchange for food, medicines, and humanitarian needs.

The Iraqi acceptance came in a letter Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz sent to UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali on 19 January 1996 after receiving a letter from the UN official in this respect.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz told INA at the time that this acceptance comes in the wake of intensive contacts with the UN secretary general and several of the UN Security Council permanent members which adopt a friendly and balanced stand on Iraq and its legitimate demands.

'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi technical delegation, had announced following his arrival in New York that the Iraqi delegation acts in accordance with Iraq's complete abidance by cooperation with the UN General Secretariat to seek practical ways and means to implement the formula of oil in exchange for food, medicines, and humanitarians needs of the Iraqi people.

He said that if the other parties do not interfere in the dialogue this will pave the way for reaching a practical solution that will satisfy the parties concerned.

The optimistic atmosphere of the two delegations' talks also coincided with a similar local, Arab, and international atmosphere. One day after the start of the talks, the Council of Ministers held a meeting chaired by President Saddam Husayn and voiced hope that the dialogue with the United Nations would produce positive results. Official international circles also welcomed and blessed the dialogue to reach fruitful results, chief among these were the Russian, French, Chinese, British, and Arab positions.

A spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry said that Iraq's entry into dialogue with the United Nations would help improve the humanitarian situation in Iraq, which has become a source of growing concern for the international community.

He asserted that the oil-for-food deal was only a temporary measure that would lead to lifting the blockade on Iraq.

The Russian position followed a previous one, which was disclosed when Grivoriy Karasin, spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry, announced that Baghdad's decision to hold contacts with the United Nations was a positive step in the right direction and that Russia hoped that consultations would produce positive results.

The official spokesman for the French Foreign Ministry said that the dialogue was a positive step and was in line with French calls for easing the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The spokesman for the British Foreign Office pointed out that his country encouraged and backed the talks and would be happy to see positive results.

The Chinese ambassador to Iraq asserted that his country was following up the dialogue with concern, hoped that positive results would be produced, and blessed every step toward easing the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Turkey also said that it welcomed the dialogue because it would end the suffering of the Iraqi people and would also enable them to overcome the economic hardships from which they have suffered for more than five years as a result of the blockade.

The Arab League General Secretariat voiced hope that the two sides would reach an acceptable formula to enable Iraq to secure its needs and that it was concerned about Iraq's safety, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

Many UN observers and diplomats, who have been following up the technical dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations, believe that the positive atmosphere of the talks, as well as the mutual understanding, has opened up new spheres of serious and fruitful cooperation between Iraq and the United Nations in order to reach an acceptable solution and to end some of the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the blockade that has been imposed on Iraq for more than five years now.

Iraq: Daily Analyzes 'Positive Nature' of Talks With UN

JN2102125596 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0930 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 21 Feb (INA)—The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH stresses that the

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positive nature of dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations on how to exchange oil for humanitarian needs seems clear through the agreement reached between the two sides on an unofficial working paper prepared for the Iraqi Government and the UN secretary general to study and to make a decision on before the resumption of dialogue.

In an article today, the paper adds: Reaching an agreement on an unofficial working paper is in itself a positive step which calls for optimism. This is because the objective of the first round of technical dialogue, which was concluded, is, as had been set in advance, to prepare a draft executive plan to include what was agreed upon during the dialogue in terms of issues and measures, and not to announce a final agreement between Iraq and the United Nations.

The paper notes: Based on the official correspondence between Iraq and the UN General Secretariat, it was agreed to open dialogue on two stages. The first stage includes a technical dialogue which would include more than one round, whose basic objective is to reach a joint understanding on the means of exchanging oil for humanitarian needs and the preparation of a draft executive plan based on this understanding. The second stage includes political dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations to reach an official agreement on the unofficial working paper. This necessitates a political decision by the highest echelons in Iraq and the United Nations.

The paper adds: What has been accomplished as of the day before yesterday was expected, and has taken place within its original framework. This fact shows that certain sides' expectations on reaching a final and decisive agreement following the round of technical dialogue prove that these sides are either ignorant of the rules of this dialogue, or biased. Their objective is to cast doubts on the success of dialogue to create psychological disturbance which would cause the prices to increase again. However, this is an exposed game which will not succeed.

The paper says: Reaching a final and official agreement is the objective of the political dialogue, not the technical dialogue. This explains the end of the first round and the two delegations' return to their frames of reference after preparing an unofficial working paper. The task of the technical delegation ended after the technical dialogue set the bases of the subsequent political dialogue. The political dialogue is expected to begin in New York and Baghdad in March between political delegations from Iraq and the United Nations after the Iraqi leadership studies the unofficial working paper and makes a clear and comprehensive decision on it.

The paper stresses: Anyone who wants to assess what was accomplished in New York without taking into consideration this fact will make clear mistakes. This will also place him in the position of those who premeditatedly seek to instill despair in the people to achieve evil and selfish goals. Dialogue is an exchange of viewpoints and ideas, and a discussion of reconciliatory formulas to reach joint understanding which is necessary to pave the way for reaching the final official agreement.

Concluding its article, the paper says: Following the fruitful rounds of technical dialogue, the two delegations reached a joint clear-cut understanding to a point where, even those who harbor rancor and hostility toward Iraq, and those who express concern over the success of dialogue, could not deny. What remains is to study the unofficial working paper by the competent frameworks of reference in Iraq and the United Nations, and to make an official and comprehensive decision in this regard.

Iraq: Irrigation Ministry Official Terms Water Talks 'Fruitful'

JN2002145496 Baghdad INA in English
1230 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb. 20, INA— Head of the Iraqi delegation to talks with Syria on the Euphrates water has described the Damascus talks as fruitful and useful.

Senior Irrigation Undersecretary 'Abd-al-Sattar Salman told INA the Iraqi delegation discussed with the Syrian team, led by Deputy Irrigation Minister Barakat Hadid, ways of reaching an agreement on a fair distribution of the Euphrates river water in accordance with rules of international law that guarantee the interests of parties concerned.

Salman said views were identical on the need to resume tripartite meetings. He said Iraq and Syria hoped the meetings would be resumed as soon as possible.

Iraq: Iran's 'Irresponsible' Policy Toward Country Criticized

JN1802144696 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0745 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 18 Feb (INA) — The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has criticized the Iranian Government's policy toward Iraq. It describes this policy as unscrupulous and unjustifiable interference in Iraq's domestic affairs, not to mention its being a contradiction of the principles of neighborliness and relations between states.

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In an article published here today, the paper says that this unwise and irresponsible policy has amazed even the Iranian newspaper SALAM, which published an article criticizing Iran's contradictory policy on Iraq and interference in northern Iraq.

The paper says that since the end of the Iranian aggression against it, Iraq has been following a rational, open-minded policy toward Iran in the hope that neighborly relations will be established to achieve security and stability for the good of the people of the two countries and the region, which is coming under various colonialist and imperialist pressures.

The paper notes that, in line with this policy, Iraq sent several delegations to Tehran to discuss the prospects of cooperation between the two countries and to resolve a number of pending issues, especially the issue of returning Iraqi POW's to their families since Iraq has returned all Iranian POW's to their families.

The paper refers to the Iranian Government's stand during the Mother of Battles and its direct responsibility for the chapter of treason and treachery.

The paper says: If we remember that, then we will have a clear picture of the Iranian policy, which is not in line with the policy of neighborliness that Tehran should follow toward Iraq.

The paper concludes: Relations between the two countries can be improved if Iran follows a policy based on the principles of relations between states and neighborliness and on the need of the Iraqi, Iranian, and other people of the region for security and stability, free of interference in domestic affairs and the unscrupulous methods pursued by the Iranian Government.

Iraq: Baghdad TV Reports Return of Husayn Kamil 20 Feb

JN2002185496 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1824 GMT 20 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] A spokesman for the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party has stated the following:

Husayn Kamil Hasan sent a letter to Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him, dated 17 February 1996 appealing and pleading to his excellency to allow him to return to Iraq.

Leader President Saddam Husayn presented the text of the letter to a joint meeting of the RCC and the Iraq Command yesterday, Monday, 19 February 1996. Following a review by the RCC and the Iraq Command of the background of all that is known about the subject, and based on the firm policy which the leadership has pursued to allow any person who fled Iraq for any reason whatsoever and then requested pardon to return to the homeland, the RCC and the Iraq Command decided to approve his request and appeal and to allow him to return to Iraq and deal with him as an ordinary citizen.

The spokesman stressed: The march of the great Iraq, which is protected by God, the all merciful compassionate, will remain bigger, greater, and loftier than all the failed hopes and than all disenchanted, treacherous, renegade, disillusioned, and sinful ones.

The IRAQI NEWS AGENCY learned that Husayn Kamil Hasan arrived in Iraq this evening, 20 February 1996.

Iraq: Husayn Kamil Ready To Stand Trial, Face Outcome

JN2102074096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0600 GMT 21 Feb 96

[Report by Randah Habib in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] General Husayn Kamil Hasan, the Iraqi president's son-in-law, returned to Iraq with his family members and his brother Saddam Hasan and his family six months after their much publicized flight from Iraq.

Kamil's return came after the Iraqi Ambassador in Amman Nuri al-Wayyis conveyed to him the Iraqi authorities' approval of his return. The ambassador accompanied the three-car convoy in which the group fled Baghdad on 8 August 1995.

General Hasan told us that he sent a letter to the Iraqi president requesting to return without conditions. He added that he is ready to stand trial and face the consequences.

Husayn Kamil's decision to return came after statements by U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry, who revealed earlier this month that his country is cooperating with Jordan and other countries in the region to speed up the fall of Saddam Husayn. Moreover, Husayn Kamil was disappointed that Amman is hosting the office of an Iraqi opposition movement — the Iraqi National Accord.

Political and diplomatic circles in Amman wonder about the fate of the repentant Iraqi defector.

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Iraq: Paper Sees 'Sure Signs' of Plan To Topple Regime

MM2002170696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 17 Feb 96 p 17

[Article by Salamah Ni'mat: "Toppling Saddam: New Signs"]

[FBIS Translated Text] There are sure signs that a plan exists to topple the Iraqi regime from within, with the help and coordination as well as the political and perhaps logistical support of some states in the region and the United States. Has the countdown to end Saddam Husayn's rule actually started?

What is certain at this stage is that, five years after the end of the second Gulf war, no one wants to rehabilitate the Iraqi regime, either in the Arab Gulf or internationally. Instead, we can say that the isolation of Iraq was heightened last year when Jordan joined the camp of those who think it "hopeless" to deal with such a regime. Amman, which politically and economically was the closest to Baghdad, is now at the forefront of those calling for alleviation of the plight of the Iraqi people, for which the Iraqi regime is primarily responsible.

The Jordanian move in this direction was not outside the scope of regional developments and international calculations, or, more importantly, outside Jordanian national interest. There was the welcome given to the defector Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil, the intensive political campaign against the Baghdad government launched by King Husayn and his government, the halving of Jordanian exports to Iraq, the Jordanian rapprochement with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and recently with Kuwait, the formation of a new government headed by 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti.... All these are signs that Jordan's divorce from Baghdad is now clear and irrevocable.

Bearing in mind that the Iraqi-Iranian and recent Iraqi-Syrian romance (Syrian-Iraqi talks on borders and continental waters [as published] and the exchange of visits between Iraq and Iran) cannot transcend tactics to take on a strategic dimension, the Iraqi regime is now suffering regional and international isolation worse than ever before, to say nothing of the deterioration of the internal situation which is threatening to explode.

Regardless of the talks on implementing Resolution 986 and their outcome, which would certainly serve Washington's aims and objectives, not Baghdad's, if only at least because of the balance of power, one cannot ignore U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry's statements on coordination with Jordan and "other states" to speed up the Iraqi regime's demise. Neither can one ignore the political moves which followed those statements, such as King Husayn's talks with Saudi leaders, his meeting with President Mubarak in Cairo, and the detente in Jordan's relations with Kuwait. On 6 February the U.S. secretary said, verbatim, that "there are some actions that we, along with Jordan and other states in the region, can undertake to hasten the demise of the current regime in Iraq. We are now cooperating on some of these issues, and I cannot go into details. We have, however, started cooperating on these plans..."

Despite later attempts by Washington and Jordan to downplay these statements, it would be foolish to view them as a "slip of the tongue" from the Pentagon's first official.

On the Jordanian and Egyptian officials' own admission, the Iraq issue dominated the Husayn-Mubarak talks in Cairo the day before yesterday, which, with the exception of a short formal meeting attended by senior officials from both sides, took place in total privacy between them. In the press conference that followed the talks, the two leaders announced that they share the view that change must necessarily come from within Iraq and that their countries are ready to help and support the Iraqi people (from outside) to alleviate their plight and safeguard their unity and territorial integrity.

Just as it would be foolish to ignore Perry's statements, it would also be foolish to imagine that the Husayn-Mubarak talks did not focus on those statements and their implications.

Anyone observing the recent developments must form the impression, based on sure signs, that there is a U.S.-regional move to topple the Iraqi regime from within, after the attempt to isolate it completely from outside and rearranging the regional situation in a way that would help contain the uncertainty of the post-Saddam Husayn phase. Only time will tell.

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Israel: Coalition, Opposition Agree on 29 May Election Date

TA2002162196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There is an agreed election date: 29 May. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that both the coalition and the opposition reached an agreement on this date and that the Knesset Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee will convene this evening or tomorrow morning to consolidate a draft resolution to hold the elections on 29 May.

Israel: Knesset Committee Approves Election Bill Formulation

TA2102080796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Knesset Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee unanimously approved the formulation of the draft resolution for the dissolution of the 13th Knesset, setting Wednesday, 29 May, as election day. The draft resolution will be brought to the Knesset plenum today for a first reading, and next Monday [26 February] it will go through the final approval stage. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the Knesset committee is currently approving a series of regulations related to the new date set for elections.

Israel: Knesset Discusses Jerusalem Bills, Election Regulations

TA2102114696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Knesset today struck off its agenda two draft resolutions that were submitted by the opposition and would require that amendments to the Jerusalem Law be made only with a special Knesset majority. Fifty-five coalition members voted against the proposals, while the opposition mustered the support of only 50 Knesset members. Zissman and Qahalani abstained from voting.

With the aid of coalition votes, the Knesset passed, in its first reading, a bill revoking the ban on airing the images and voices of election candidates during the 30 days prior to election day. The opposition was opposed to this. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht notes that the coalition intends to reach an agreement with the opposition whereby this ban would be in effect for only three weeks prior to election day. The Knesset also unanimously adopted a series of technical amendments related to the election campaign.

Israel: Security Sources Say Abortive Attack Directed at North

TA2102060996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Security sources say that the small plane or hang glider that exploded over Majd al-Silm in southern Lebanon yesterday was on its way to a suicide attack in Israel. Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe has learned that some of the terrorist organizations are able to operate small planes for terrorist purposes. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] learned its lessons from the hang glider terrorist attack nine years ago. Sophisticated equipment was procured for early warning and detection of such gliders, and the operational capability of interception devices has been enhanced.

In this context, our correspondent reports on a new position for women in the IDF: observers along the borders. Ten such women are already positioned along the northern border following an experimental training course, and they volunteered for this work.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 0500 GMT on 21 February adds that the glider "was apparently manned by Hizballah terrorists. Air Force helicopters were brought into the area in case another glider was on its way, and security forces were put on alert. Flares were fired along the border overnight."]

Israel: Lubrani Comments on Abortive 'Terrorist' Attack

TA2102074496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 21 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Uri Lubrani, coordinator of government activities in Lebanon, by correspondents Mikha Friedman and Ya'el Qovetz; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Friedman] Good morning to you, Uri Lubrani. Do we have any assessment or solid information about the target of the terrorist using the hang glider?

[Lubrani] Details are still very unclear, but to the best of our knowledge, it is clear that this is an attempt to diversify the anti-Israeli activity. It is clear that the terrorists are trying to introduce a type of weapon to which we are not accustomed. It is clear that rather than a decline in activity, Hizballah and other terrorist organizations, and Syria in the background....

[Friedman, interrupting] We will touch on the Syrian angle shortly, but we still want to understand something

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about this planned attack. Was the glider going to crash over a certain Israeli target?

[Lubrani] This is obvious, and it apparently crashed over the wrong place.

[Qovetz] You are talking about a change in the type of weapon. The question is whether this is a tactical or a strategic change.

[Lubrani] I was talking of the diversification of types of weapons only.

[Qovetz] In this sense too, it is for the first time that Hizballah's aerial unit is trying to perpetrate an attack. Again, are we talking of a new type of attacks, more demonstrative attacks which may be politically motivated, or does it simply point to advanced technology at the disposal of the terrorists?

[Lubrani] I do not think we are talking about advanced technology. We saw it eight years ago. I think they are simply trying to hit us in every possible way. They are doing it this way just as they do it with car bombs and other means.

[Friedman] You mentioned Syria. Another Israeli-Syrian round of talks will take place in the United States in five days. Assuming that Syria is aware of every significant event or incident in southern Lebanon, is there a connection between the political and terrorist aspects here?

[Lubrani] What I see here is an incident that somewhat contradicts what we are repeatedly told — namely, that the Syrians are making an effort to reduce the number of attacks against us.

[Friedman] Still, so I am told by our army affairs correspondent, in January, Hizballah perpetrated only eight anti-IDF [Israel Defense Forces] actions, in contrast to the average of 50 actions monthly before January, mostly directed against the SLA [South Lebanese Army]. This points to a dramatic decline.

[Lubrani] First, I am not sure that these statistics are accurate. Still, let us not forget that we are talking about January, a difficult winter month. Let me add that if, God forbid, this glider had reached the target it was aiming at, all these statistics would have been worthless.

Israel: Northern Commander on Detection of Glider Attack

TA2102084096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General 'Amiram Levin, the commander of the Northern Command, says that the hang glider that exploded yesterday was detected by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers before it entered the security zone. The commander believes it would have been possible to hit the glider if it had managed to enter the security zone. In an interview on the "It's All Talk" program, Maj. Gen. Levin emphasized that it was not a miracle out of the blue, and that the IDF is prepared for such incidents and would have managed to intercept the glider on its way.

Israel: Baraq on Negotiations With Lebanon, Jerusalem Issue

TA1902075896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq says that the peace negotiations with Lebanon will be held separately between the two countries. Minister Baraq emphasized his belief that this will not take place without the go-ahead from Damascus. The foreign minister toured the Jordan Valley yesterday, and his remarks are quoted by our correspondent in the north Ilan Ro'e.

[Begin recording] [Ro'e] Over the [illegible] 48 hours Minister Baraq toured the Jordan Valley all the way up to Tiberias and then Nahariyya, lecturing about his political credo. As a former chief of staff and the current foreign minister, Baraq was asked for his position about the Syrian-Lebanese issue.

[Baraq] To the best of our understanding, at a certain stage in the negotiations with the Syrians, the green light will be given to the Lebanese, and it will then be possible to begin negotiations on a peace treaty with Lebanon. Such a treaty is important, desirable, and obtainable.

[Ro'e] If we have thus far thought that the negotiations over Lebanon will be decided only in the framework of the negotiations with Syria, Baraq now emphasizes:

[Baraq] The negotiations over Lebanon are inseparable from the negotiations with Syria in the sense that they will take place only after the negotiations with Syria, but they are separable in the sense that we will hold them with the Lebanese and not with the Syrian Government.

[Ro'e] Minister Baraq does not agree with the opinion that Labor, despite its categorical stance on the Jerusalem issue, is pushed into countering the Likud's propaganda line, stating: We have a clear, unequivocal position, but....

[Baraq] The reason we need not discuss this at all is that in the Camp David accords, over 15 years ago, the late Menahem Begin undertook that the Palestinians would be able to raise anything on the agenda of the negotiations.

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[Ro'e] Despite Minister Baraq's rank of lieutenant general, he is now undergoing the training stage in Israeli politics. [end recording]

Israel: Baraq—No Crisis With Russia; Visit Depends on Developments

TA2002193396 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 20 Feb 96

[Studio interview with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by anchor Hayim Yavin — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Yavin] Is there a crisis with Russia?

[Baraq] There is no crisis. Russia is a very important country. It is one of the cosponsors of the Madrid conference. It has a new foreign minister who is familiar with the Middle East. We have been receiving signals that Russia intends to upgrade the profile of its activity on various issues.

[Yavin] Are you worried?

[Baraq] I am not worried. There are a series of bilateral issues between us. There is also the political issue. At present, the talks between us and the Syrians are going very well, directly, with a U.S. presence....

[Yavin, interrupting] Will you go to Moscow?

[Baraq] If developments on issues between us require that I make a 24-hour visit to Moscow, I will go. I would be glad to meet Primakov, who is an important person.

[Yavin] Back to the election issues. Can you confirm or deny the report that 400 Palestinian policemen were present on the Temple Mount on 16 February to help the Israel Police?

[Baraq] I know nothing about this, but the Likud's stirring up the affair is causing political damage. In fact, it raises the issue of Jerusalem's unity for discussion. This is an election gimmick.

[Yavin] Why a gimmick? This is a real problem, Mr. Baraq.

[Baraq] The way they are doing it, it is a gimmick. There is no other issue the public is more unanimous about than the unity of Jerusalem. Creating this picture is a gimmick.

[Yavin] Do you call the important, Oslo-type talks a gimmick?

[Baraq] Not Oslo-type. The Oslo talks were held when there was no dialogue between us and the Palestinians. Today, we hold negotiations with them. Peres and I meet with 'Arafat freely. We do not need academics to talk for us. I repeat: This is a gimmick that has evolved into grave incitement. The distance between the slanderous claim that Peres is partitioning Jerusalem and calling Peres a traitor may be shorter than it seems.

[Yavin] Allow me to read a reaction we have just received from Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal: It seems that Netanyahu has launched the second chapter of the Bibi horror show. I am already curious about the third chapter. If this were not such a serious issue, Shahal adds, I would have let it rest, but I am asking Mr. Netanyahu to stop using Jerusalem as a cheap election gimmick — just as you said, Mr. Baraq. There is a limit to cynicism, even when it comes to a hysterical politician on the eve of elections, Shahal says.

I see that things are warming up. How far will this go?

[Baraq] I believe that, in practice, the Likud — acting under the impression created by the polls and, more importantly, reactions in the street — is very disturbed. The time has come for the Likud to present the plan it has to offer to counter our political plan. [passage omitted]

Israel: Sources 'Concerned' About Islamic Coalition in Turkey

TA1802142196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli political sources are concerned about the establishment of a coalition in Turkey in which the Islamic party will participate. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz was told that Israel is closely following the possible ramifications of such a coalition. The sources stressed that Turkey is an important ally of Israel. The political sources charge that for years Europe has failed to live up to promises to integrate Turkey into Europe, thus making the extremist elements in Turkey stronger.

Israel: Foreign Ministry Denies Reports on Israelis Jailed in Egypt

TA1802064696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Officials in the Foreign Ministry have denied reports that six Israelis were jailed in Egypt for smuggling. The ministry officials said that over the past year, six Israelis were stopped at the Taba crossing trying to smuggle arms out of Sinai. They were each fined $150 and ordered to return to Israel. Last week, a court in Suez handed down sentences of six months each, which would only take effect if any of the Israelis entered Egypt. There is no extradition agreement between the two countries.

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Israel: Shahal Says U.S. Opposed Past Overtures to Iraq

TA1902105696 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 19 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Greer Fay Cashman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal said yesterday it is possible to reach a peace accord with Iraq. Shahal, himself of Iraqi origin, said overtures had been made over the past few years and that he had reported this development to the late prime minister Yitzhaq Rabin. Israel had been unable to take steps toward accommodation with Iraq due to American opposition, Shahal told a Labor Party parlor meeting.

Israel: Iranian Spying Efforts Confront New Shin Bet Chief

TA1902111696 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 19 Feb 96 p A1

[Report by Ze'ev Schiff]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Confronting increasing Iranian spying activity in Israel is a relatively new mission that incoming Shin Bet chief 'Ami Ayalon, who entered office yesterday, will have to undertake. This, in addition to the routine missions which have not changed, such as dealing with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad terrorism.

Over the last few months we have witnessed increased efforts by Iranian intelligence to recruit agents in Israel. If in the past Iran settled for assisting Palestinian terror organizations such as Islamic Jihad and Ahmad Jibril's organization, now there is unequivocal evidence regarding Iran's efforts to obtain operational and other kinds of information in Israel.

The first case of Iranian spying involved the Israeli Herzl Rad, who was detained some eight months ago on suspicion of spying for Iran. The second case involved the Palestinian Mahmud Rajib Salamah, who was detained in the initial stage of his intelligence-gathering operation. Salamah was expelled to Jordan, where he was interrogated by Jordanian intelligence. [passage omitted]

Israel: Peres Reiterates Stand on United Jerusalem

TA2102115696 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 21 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Liat Collins and Bill Hutman]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres stopped just short of accusing the Likud of incitement during a meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday. [passage omitted]

He said Israel is insisting that no Palestinian Authority [PA] activities take place in eastern Jerusalem, and that three offices have been removed: the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, the Palestinian Broadcasting Authority and the Health Council.

However, at least one of the three PA offices in Jerusalem that Peres said was closed remains open, a senior researcher with Peace Watch said yesterday.

The Palestinian Health Council still operates in eastern Jerusalem, despite a warning by the government last year it must leave the city, said Ziv Hellman, who co-authored "Institutions of the PA in Jerusalem" for Peace Watch, a non-partisan monitoring group.

Hellman said he spoke with council officials last week, and they maintained they had no connection with the PA. The government in the past has rejected this claim.

Peace Watch last year found eight other PA affiliated organizations, including the PA's ministry for religious affairs, operating in Jerusalem, in violation of the Oslo accords.

Answering Nisim Zvili (Labor), Peres said he would not oppose Orient House serving the local Palestinian population and tried to soften the ban on foreign minister visits there issued this week by Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal. "If foreign ministers want to visit Arab residents of Jerusalem we can't prevent them whether it's at Orient House or at the King David (Hotel)." He said Israel cannot lodge a formal complaint against Faysal al-Husayni as he did not stand for election, is not a member of the Palestinian National Council and is not a minister. But "Israel will absolutely not allow Jerusalem to become part of the autonomous areas," he said.

"There is no place in Jerusalem for Jibril al-Rujub or his men," Peres told 'Imanu'el Zismann (Labor, Third Way). He said he had ordered Shahal to take any necessary action to prevent the operations of al-Rujub's security forces in the city.

Peres told Ran Kohen (Meretz), there are still fears of a terror attack by two organized groups in Judaea and Samaria and two in Gaza, and the closure would remain in effect. He also told Kohen Israel had sent the Palestinians a message "not to interfere in our elections as we didn't interfere in yours."

Regarding the wall being built around Rachel Tomb's near Bethlehem, Peres sad he did not know who had ordered its construction and that it was "pointless" and

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showed a "lack of judgment." He said government coordinator in the territories Maj.-Gen. Oren Shahor had examined the site and determined a one-meter high separation would be sufficient.

The prime minister said settlement of Betar would continue and 900 housing units are in the planning stage. Regarding Qiryat Sefer, Peres said the ministerial committee would decide when and how construction would take place. He assured Zismann that Ma'ale Adumim would remain under Israeli sovereignty.

Israel: Majority Believes Likud More Than Labor on Jerusalem Issue

TA2002100896 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 20 Feb 96 p 1

[Gallup poll]

[FBIS Translated Text] Question: The Likud claims that Peres will divide Jerusalem, while Labor argues that Peres will preserve Jerusalem's unity. Whom do you believe more?

Answer: Labor — 37 percent; Likud — 43 percent; neither — 13 percent; do not know/refuse to answer — 7 percent.

The poll was conducted on 19 February among 502 Jewish adults. The maximum margin of error is approximately 4 percent.

Israel: David Levi Announces Establishment of New Party

TA2002122696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Knesset Member David Levi today announced the establishment of his new party, called Gesher [Bridge]. Levi said the movement, as its name says, will serve as a bridge in the social and the political fields, and made it clear that in the political field it would be a bridge between the desirable and the feasible. Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel said that Levi noted that he would be a partner to any government that accepts the principles of his party and that anybody elected by the people would be acceptable to him.

Israel: Levi Party To Join Any Government Accepting Its Principles

TA2102120096 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 21 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Michal Yudelman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MK [Knesset Member] David Levi yesterday officially launched his new party, Gesher (Bridge), announcing that after the elections he will be a partner to any government — Labor or Likud — which accepts Gesher's principles.

Presenting his new party at a press conference in Tel Aviv's Bet Sokolov, Levi dismissed surveys predicting him two to three mandates, stating that "according to our surveys, we have a potential of 20 percent of the undecided voters, which means seven to 10 mandates." "Mark my words: no new government will be formed without us," Levi declared.

Levi stressed that Gesher, a socialist national party in the political center, will be a bridge between "the two polarities of the Left and Right. A bridge of tolerance, understanding and social sensitivity between Jews and Arabs, religious and secular, the metropolis and distant development townships."

Levi lashed out at both Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and opposition leader Binyamin Netanyahu, noting that "one candidate, the prime minister, is walking — running — in a mine field, leaving live mines behind him which may blow up any minute. Facing him is the opposition leader, shooting from the hip in every direction without a definite line, without an alternative."

Levi made it clear that he has no intention of returning to the Likud. "I don't want to deal with the past. We have embarked on our way as an independent party, period. I don't want to deal with what is going on in the Likud, all that is no longer relevant," he said.

Levi would not name other known figures on his list, apart from himself and MK David Magen, but denied reports that he had vetoed the participation of mayors and local authority heads.

Israel: Second Arrow Test Launch Termed 'Complete Success'

TA2002161396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel's Arrow missile has been launched successfully for the second time. Reporting on the launch earlier this afternoon is Alan Ben-'Ami.

[Begin Ben-'Ami recording] It was just a few minutes after three this afternoon when this latest test launch of the Arrow took place. As in the previous test last July, the rocket was not sent up to intercept an incoming missile. Scientists at Israel Aircraft Industries [IAI], the major contractor in development of the Arrow, said the aim of the launch was further tests on various systems of the missile. It was a test of the tracking and guidance performance of its companion radar equipment developed by the Elta Company and operated for the

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first time today. Cameras and equipment to receive telemetry from the rocket in flight tracked the Arrow 2 as it streaked into the sky. The two-stage missile, weighing a little more than two tonnes, was in flight for just under a minute before instructions from the ground made it self-destruct.

Moshe Qeret, head of IAI, said that today's test was a complete success, describing it as another step towards development of an antimissile defense system for Israel. Officials from IAI, from the Defense Ministry, and the Pentagon joined scientists from the Arrow project team who gathered at the launch site at Palmahim on the Mediterranean coast near Tel Aviv for the occasion. The United States is partially funding development of the Arrow.

Israeli Defense Ministry sources point out that this is the second test of an operational model of the Arrow which has been successfully carried out, but, said one, the harder tests lie ahead, when the Arrow will be sent up to intercept and destroy an incoming missile. The prototype model of Arrow has proved itself in such tests and the hope is that Arrow 2, the operational model, will be equally successful. In all, there are three more launchings of Arrow 2 scheduled to take place this year. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1600 GMT on 20 February adds that "Prime Minister Shim'on Peres welcomed the successful test, saying that the project is an impressive and universally unique technological breakthrough. He expressed his appreciation for the hundreds of scientists and workers directly and indirectly employed in developing the missile and its accompanying systems."]

Israel: Report on Palestinian Police Guarding 16 Feb Prayers Denied

TA2002185396 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 20 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister's bureau this evening denied reports that 400 Palestinian policemen guarded the Temple Mount during the prayers on 16 February. More than 150,000 Palestinian worshipers attended the prayers.

A spokesman for Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu says that the presence of Palestinian policemen in the heart of Jerusalem is grave and very regrettable.

Authoritative Israel Police sources are accusing the Likud of attempting to spread these rumors as part of its election campaign on the Jerusalem issue. As reported, the prime minister's bureau said this evening that the event only waqf men were on guard during the event and that this is yet another attempt by the Likud to sling mud at the prime minister.

Israel: Buchanan Said To Inflame 'Darker Passions' of Conservatives

TA1902135496 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (HAYOM supplement) in Hebrew 19 Feb 96 p 3

[Editorial by Yosef Lapid: "Buchanan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Patrick Buchanan's growing strength in the U.S. Republican Party's primaries is a reminder that the isolationist, racist, and anti-Semitic right wing does well and goes far in U.S. politics. Buchanan, a prominent journalist and television commentator, inflames the darker passions of U.S. conservatives. They believe him when he says that their problems are the result of U.S. aid to foreign countries (like Israel), to immigrants (Hispanics), to non-Christians (like the Jews), and to all the rest of the rabble (Blacks), who have clustered together under the warm, comfortable quilt of U.S. society, which spoils and pampers them.

Senator Robert Dole will most probably defeat Buchanan in the important New Hampshire primaries. Nevertheless, the very fact that Buchanan can challenge Dole, who represents the conservative establishment, constitutes alarming proof of the negative sentiments eating away at the fringes of the American consensus.

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Jordan: al-Kabariti, Husayn Kamil Left 'of Own Free Will'

JN2002153796 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1508 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn has received a cable of thanks from General Husayn Kamil 'Ali Hasan for the warm hospitality the king had accorded him and his family during their stay in Jordan. The cable came before Gen. Husayn Kamil, his brother Saddam, and their families, who left Amman for Baghdad this afternoon after they decided to return to their country following a more than six-month stay in Jordan during which they were Jordan's guests.

This came in a statement by 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, prime minister and foreign minister, who affirmed that the decision on the departure of Gen. Husayn Kamil and his family was made by the general himself and of his own free will after he held private contacts with Baghdad.

His excellency the Iraqi ambassador in Amman accompanied Gen. Husayn Kamil to the borders.

Jordan: Amman Urges Iraqi Opposition Charter

MM2102091996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 18 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Salamah Ni'mat in Amman and AL-HAYAH in Cairo: "Jordan Urges Iraqi Opposition To Draw Up New Constitution"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A Jordanian official source yesterday told AL-HAYAH that the Iraqi opposition groups and forces should agree on an Iraqi charter or constitution as a starting point for their political action, with a view to preparing for the "Iraq of the future."

Meanwhile, Egypt has denied that it has any part in a plan to topple President Saddam Husayn's regime, and said that reports about such a role are "speculation."

The source said that the current situation in Iraq "cannot go on indefinitely," and that the opposition organizations and their forces "have a responsibility to safeguard the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq's people in the next phase by drawing up a democratic charter or constitution on which they agree." He warned against Iraq turning into another Afghanistan.

He pointed out that the Iraqi opposition groups "have an important part to play, shunning infighting, and should avoid transferring their current disputes to inside Iraq in the next phase."

He pointed out that "the void which would be created by the collapse of the Iraqi regime could create a situation similar to that in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of Soviet forces, since minimal agreement was not achieved."

In response to a question on the role that could be played by Iraq's neighboring states in the next phase, the source said that change in Iraq "must come from within and be for the better, not just change for change's sake."

He went on to say that the external role should be limited to "being in harmony with the Iraqi people's will and helping it."

Meanwhile, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry criticized press reports suggesting that Egypt is participating in plans to topple the Iraqi regime. An authoritative ministry source asserted that "Egypt has a firm and clear position with regard to safeguarding Iraq's unity and territorial integrity, and rejects interference in its internal affairs."

He described reports saying that the meeting between President Husni Mubarak and King Husayn reinforces the view that there is a plan to topple President Saddam Husayn's regime as "pure speculation."

He added that President Mubarak "has clearly and unequivocally reaffirmed Egypt's position and its firm support for Iraq's territorial integrity, its efforts to alleviate the brotherly Iraqi people's burden, and its complete rejection of interference in Iraq's internal affairs."

Jordan: Editorial Justifies Opening of Iraqi Opposition Office

JN2002150396 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 20 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Office Breaks No Rules"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The opening of an office for an Iraqi opposition group in Amman comes as no surprise given the commitment of the government to lend support to any credible and peaceful change in Baghdad. The so called "National Accord Movement" actually started its campaign to end the suffering of the Iraqi people back in 1991 by encouraging the introduction of a democratic process in their country based on pluralism. The rationale of this movement rests on the incontestable proposition that all the blame for the misfortunes of Iraq lies squarely in the absence of a truly democratic government in Baghdad.

The chain of colossal errors committed by the Saddam regime ever since it allowed itself to enter a devastating 8-year war with Iran ended with an even more catastrophic war in 1990 when Iraqi troops invaded and occupied Kuwait. The fact that millions of Iraqis have suffered dearly throughout the past two decades, on top

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of the hundreds of thousands who lost their lives on the altar of a medieval dictatorial decision-making process, has proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the panacea to the country and its people lies in a genuine democratic rule.

The promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights anywhere in the world is a duty imposed on all states by international human rights law. Jordan and other countries would be derelict in their international obligations should they choose to stay quiet or indifferent to the denial of even the most basic human rights in Iraq.

Against this backdrop, the opening of an office for an Iraqi opposition group conforms to international norms and can never be regarded as interference in the internal affairs of a neighbouring state. It is a well recognised principle that when it comes to human rights, the international community can exercise jurisdiction over any systematic and gross violations. Likewise, no country may hide behind worn-out and defunct policies of non-interference in domestic affairs of another state when the latter sets no limits on the abuse of human rights.

This being the case, the guest opposition group may not abuse the hospitality of the host country and engage in any other activity that goes beyond the promotion of human rights. Organizing an opposition army would therefore appear to go beyond the legitimate mandate of any dissident office. On the other hand, a call for an uprising or a revolt can be viewed as a legitimate function if all peaceful efforts to effect change are exhausted. As the Bosnian situation has amply demonstrated, the international community could also intervene militarily if necessary to halt gross human rights violations.

As long as the "Accord" office in Amman is dedicated to the promotion of pluralistic democracy among the Iraqis by disseminating valuable and true information about their country, then no country including Iraq may claim that Jordan is indirectly involved in a hostile act against its Arab neighbouring country.

Jordan: Anti-Normalization Committee Fires Shunaykat, Kamal Nasir

JN1802152796 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 19 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] The Higher Committee of the Jordanian Popular Conference for the Protection of the Homeland and the Confrontation of Normalization has decided to terminate the memberships of Dr. Mustafa Shunaykat and Dr. Kamal Nasir because they agreed to participate in the new government and especially because this participation conflicts with the resolutions and objectives of the popular conference.

The Higher Committee called on the Democratic Arab Unionist Party [DAUP] to declare its stand toward the participation of Dr. Mustafa Shunaykat, one of the party's leaders, in the government. It also called on the party to ask Dr. Shunaykat to resign from the cabinet. If he does not, the Higher Committee will ask the DAUP to leave the opposition parties grouping, the Higher Committee, the popular conference, and all its committees.

The committee stressed that these demands constitute the minimum accepted by the opposition parties and the majority of the members of the Higher Committee of the Popular Conference for the Protection of the Homeland and the Confrontation of Normalization.

Jordan: Direction of New Government Discussed

JN1902133096 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Feb 96 p 6

[Column by Walid M. al-Sa'di: "The Raison d'Etre of al-Kabariti's Government"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The sudden change of gear in the country that was brought about by the resignation of al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir and the appointment of 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti as the new prime minister was given many explanations at the national level that have yet to withstand the test of the times ahead.

The most immediate reaction to the designation of a new face to run the government culminated with the search for sensational or spectacular rationalisation focused on external factors or foreign policy issues.

The rumour mill was in full swing, prior to the dramatic change of government, about a deep division in the "establishment" on how to deal with the Iraqi situation. On the one hand, there were those high officials within the centre of power who recommended a more constrained approach to the Iraqi deteriorating condition that would leave many options open for the country. Some of the seasoned personalities behind this go-slow tactic counselled against putting all of the country's eggs in one basket and wanted to draw on past experiences when Amman was caught off guard vis-a-vis developments in the region.

The old adage "one bitten twice shy" would perhaps explain best the "conservative" stance of some of these highly placed politicians and their counsel for restraints on developments in Baghdad and related policy issues.

Diametrically opposed to this group of policy advisers were the people who believed that time was running out

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on half-backed policies and that time was over ripe for clarity of vision on regional issues.

The stakes for this latter group went beyond the reparation of relations with the Gulf states, especially Riyadh, which presumably called for a more coherent and clear posture by Jordan on several fronts, especially Iraq. The obsession with the Iraqi file before and after the change of government offered therefore the most probable explanation for the seemingly abrupt change; it was also on the mind of many local and regional analysts who looked for probable clues to the advent of the "white revolution."

In retrospect, though, the division within the country on Iraq was simmering for some time and the eventual tilting of the balance, one way or the other, was actually in the cards.

This is certainly one explanation for the resignation of al- Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir and like-minded supporters.

The other explanation could be more human rights related, as evidenced first of all by His Majesty King Husayn's call on the new prime minister to clean the Jordanian house and usher in a real white revolution.

I have a hunch that the King was angered by what Deputy Tujan Faysal had reported on widespread abuses of human rights in her now famous human rights report that she submitted to the King after discovering that no one else in the government was listening or wanted to listen.

I also believe that the series of public and private interventions by former Prime Minister Tahir al-Masri on serious violations of basic human rights convinced the Monarch that his previous governments did not take seriously enough his commitment to human rights.

Then came a series of effective measures undertaken by Prime Minister al-Kabariti to give deeper effect to the thoughts of the King. Take for example the immediate release of administrative detainees who were kept behind bars without trial or charge. There was a clear signal in this move that human rights abuses need to be reversed and what better way to start his corrective policy than by freeing people who have never been tried or convicted in a court of law.

In fact I wonder why we kept these people in jail in the first place. If the incriminating evidence against them is so overwhelming, the right course to take is to try them and convict them in due course.

then came the talk about real and thorough reform regarding the government's handling of the press, including the dramatic revelation by the energetic new Minister of Information Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir that all options will be pursued by the new government to "raise the level" of the freedom of the press, including the abolition of his ministry altogether.

The criminal prosecution of journalist Salamah Ni'mat for allegedly wrongful reporting must be a starting point for the promised reform because under international norms persons accused of wrong or even malicious reporting can be sued in a civil court and not dragged to a criminal court unless the charge has to do with serious state security matters. I doubt that it can be said that what Mr. Ni'mat was charged was compromising the state security interest. [sentence as published]

There are other manifestations of the reality and depth of the white revolution that Mr. al-Kabariti is mandated to carry out which, in their cumulative sense, suggest that there is more to the rationale behind the change of government than the Iraqi file.

The immediate dialogue the government entered into with the Lawyers Association on how to turn a new page on their relations is a solid proof that the white revolution is more real than originally thought.

The policy measures already taken by the new minister of interior, 'Awad Khulayfat, on citizenship and passport rights certainly offer strong support to the proposition that the new Cabinet is sincere about its declared policy course, especially on the local scene. Mr. Khulayfat has certainly shown that Jordan is capable of being faithful to its domestic and international legal commitments.

The new standards for university admission promised by the seasoned minister of Education Mundhir al-Masri lends also support to the thesis that the white revolution would not be only cosmetics. It will be remembered that university enrollment has always been a very complex issue, fraught with claims of discrimination, that caused the discontent of many nationals.

Of course we all have to wait and see if the momentum of the promised changes will be kept.

For starters, it is still dubious whether all of Mr. al-Kabariti's team are of like-minded people regarding the urgency of transformations needed in the country.

A fast glance at his Cabinet colleagues suggests that some of them are too traditional, pure and simple, to carry out the much talked about white revolution.

Many of us were expecting the injection of some high caliber academicians and contemporary thinkers into the bloodstream of government for the purpose of changing the colour of the country across the board.

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The absence of much real new blood among the ranks of the new government has been exploited by some to cast doubt on the ultimate intents and purposes of the new team.

The prime minister himself and a very limited number of his ministers appear to be the only real new blood in the present government and many of us wonder if they alone can deliver us to the promised land.

True, the prime minister still holds important portfolios, including the Foreign Ministry and the Defence. It can be expected that these areas may be up for a major shakeup.

Against his backdrop with conflicting signals, perhaps the best way to explain the raison d'etre of Mr. al-Kabariti's Cabinet is to look inward and outward.

It seems to me that Mr. al-Kabariti has a two-pronged policy: one is national and the other is foreign. In order to carry out the latter, the premier must deliver on his promised national reforms. Genuine local reforms would certainly strengthen the political base of the government and would enable it in turn to carry out a dramatic shift of policy on Iraq and elsewhere in the region. In other words, the success on the domestic front would assure a stronger chance to succeed on the international front. Time, of course, is of essence and unless the momentum on both fronts is maintained and their viability proved there will be more questioning about what the new government is really all about.

Jordan: New Policy Statement Expected To Include Major Changes

JN1902112496 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti is expected to submit his government's policy statement to the Lower House of Parliament on Wednesday, Feb. 28, for a vote of confidence. The House will start debating Mr. al-Kabariti's statement on March 2.

The prime minister is expected to leave for the U.S. with His Majesty King Husayn on March 7, sources said.

The policy statement, which is expected to include all the government's plans for change in all fields, will be drawn after intensive debate among ministers, parliamentarians and intellectuals, a senior official told the JORDAN TIMES.

In the letter of designation, His Majesty King Husayn called on Mr. al-Kabariti to carry out a "white revolution" introducing sweeping changes in all fields including reforming bureaucracy and fighting corruption.

For the past two weeks and since the new government was formed on Feb. 4, Mr. al-Kabariti has been sounding representatives of different shades of political life, on the sort of changes he needs to introduce to enhance democracy and pluralism, government sources said.

The reshuffle of post at the Royal Court, the General intelligence Department and Public Security Department were meant to fuse "new blood" into the system in preparation for the changes Mr. al-Kabariti intends to introduce, the sources said.

One of the main tasks that Mr. al-Kabariti undertook upon forming the government was the introduction of a new election law that ensures equality and fairness. A draft election law introduced by the ongoing government of al-Sharif Zayd Bin Shakir was highly criticised by the politicians.

Mr. al-Kabariti said upon taking over earlier this month that he would "put the ceiling of public freedom higher" but would also require "greater responsibility."

Last week, Minister of Information Marwan al-Mu'ashshir promised sweeping reforms in the media and that would lead to the abolition of his ministry.

The government also pledged not to file cases against journalists nor to pressure professional associations. The government said it was aiming at laying the proper foundations for civil society institutions.

House speaker Sa'd Hayil al-Surur was quoted in the local press yesterday as saying he hoped the government would submit to Parliament a draft elections law as soon as possible to give the deputies ample time to discus and endorse the law.

He said that the law was one of the most important legislations for Jordan and enough time should be given to debating it by the majority of deputies.

Jordan: Shubaylat Reported Apparent Winner of Association Election

JN1802121996 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 18 Feb 96 p 12

[Report by Sa'dah Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Layth Shubaylat, the incumbent president of the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) currently being held and tried for lese majeste, last night appeared to be heading for a landslide victory over his three rivals for the JEA presidency.

Early results of the elections showed Mr. Shubaylat well ahead of contenders 'Abd-al-Fatah Tungar, Hany Ta'ani and Hasan Hawamidah.

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Mr. Shubaylat, who if convicted of the slander charges would face up to three years in prison, and is an opponent of peace with Israel and normalisation of relations with the Jewish state.

Islamist candidates Husni Abu Gayda was likely to win the JEA vice-president seat against 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Bitar of the nationalists bloc.

Of the seven seats reserved for council members, five were expected to go to Islamists.

Only 5,528 engineers of 12,680 registered and eligible votes turned out for Friday and Saturday elections. the JEA has more than 30,000 members.

The first result of the elections will be announced today.

Jordan: Shubaylat Reelected to JEA Presidency, Remains in Detention

JN1802141996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0915 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Layth Shubaylat was reelected president of the Jordanian Engineers Association [JEA] while still in detention in al-Juwaydah Prison on charges of slandering the Jordanian royal family.

According to the election results, announced early this morning, Shubaylat won 5,381 votes, while the three other candidates — who are supported by the government — won 761 votes out of the total 6,592 votes cast in the elections.

Jordan: Report Indicates Increase in Volume of Foreign Investment

JN1702083796 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 17 Feb 96 p 8

[Report by Tariq Ayyub]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — The volume of foreign investments in Jordan in the first nine months of 1995 has increased by 9.6 per cent compared with 1994 figures but the number of new foreign companies has decreased by 23.3 per cent in 1995, a report released by the Ministry of trade and Industry showed Thursday.

The eight-page report, which was made available to the JORDAN TIMES, indicated that the total foreign capital which was introduced in the Jordanian market in 1995, reached JD12.7 million [Jordanian dinars] ($17.8 million) compared with JD11.6 million ($16.2 million) in 1994, an increase by JD1.1 million ($1.5 million).

Most of the foreign investments in 1995 were in the industrial sector, which received the lion's share with 49.4 per cent of the total capital in the past year with investments in the sector, reaching JD6.3 million ($8.8 million) compared with JD7.5 million ($10.5 million) in 1994. The number of industrial companies decreased from 48 companies in 1994 to 23 companies in 1995.

Investments in the commercial sector were 20.2 per cent of the total foreign investments in 1995 with a capital of JD2.6 million (3.6 million) compared with JD3.3 million ($4.5 million) in 1994. The total number of foreign companies in this sector decreased from 16 companies in 1994 to 14 companies.

The foreign capital in the services sector in 1995 was second with 30.4 of the total investment. It reached JD 3.9 million ($5.4 million) compared with JD745,000 ($1.04 million) in 1994.

The report said that these figures were recorded in the first nine months of 1995, while in the remaining three months, no new figures were recorded because the foreign and Arab investments draft law was not approved, the report said.

The report added that foreign companies which were working in Jordan in 1995 reached 22 companies, up from 18 companies in 1994. The total number of the non-working foreign companies decreased to 100 companies in the past year down from 134 companies in 1994, a 25.4 per cent decrease.

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Lebanon: Plane Explodes Near Israeli Border; Army Spokesman Cited

NC2002184796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our correspondent in the central sector reports that eyewitnesses near the occupied border strip saw a plane exploding in midair over the Lebanese-Palestinian border at 1550 today. The explosion caused a loud bang and the plane crashed north of Markaba village, 1 km from the border.

According to eyewitnesses, the plane could have been a glider, because it was flying slowly and quite quietly and was a different color from a warplane. The cause of the explosion is unknown.

[In a related, Jerusalem-datelined report, Paris AFP in English at 1829 GMT on 20 February adds the following: "A small plane piloted by a suicide bomber planning to attack Israeli positions in southern Lebanon or northern Israel exploded in mid-air on Tuesday, an army spokesman said here."]

Lebanon: UN Reported To Confirm Aborted 'Terrorist' Attack

TA2002190196 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 20 Feb 96

[Talk between Ya'aqov Eylon in the studio and Menahem Horowitz in the north — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Eylon] A failed terrorist attack: A hang glider carrying at least one terrorist exploded this afternoon over the security zone in southern Lebanon. Reference is to 7 km west of Qiryat Shemona. Our correspondent Menahem Horowitz has just joined us in a live relay from the northern border. Menahem, what can be said about this failed terrorist attack at the moment?

[Horowitz] At approximately 1600 [1400 GMT] this afternoon, SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers, as well as UN and perhaps also IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers, spotted a glider that exploded over the Majd al-Silm area, 4 km west of the Galilee Panhandle, carrying at least one terrorist. A few minutes ago, UN officers confirmed this information.

[Eylon] Was this glider heading toward the security zone area, if not toward Israeli territory?

[Horowitz] The terrorist or terrorists were probably on their way to perpetrate a terrorist attack either on the northern border or in the security zone in southern Lebanon. This is the information we have been receiving these last few minutes.

[Eylon] This takes us back to the night of the gliders, that incident which had tragic results. When did it take place? Was it in 1987?

[Horowitz] That incident took place in November 1987, when a terrorist from Ahmad Jibril's organization entered an IDF base in Qiryat Shemona. Six Nahal Brigade soldiers were killed. To the best of my knowledge, the terrorists have not managed to infiltrate Israeli territory with gliders or perhaps have refrained from attempting to do so.

Lebanon: Hizballah Denies Responsibility for Glider Attack Attempt

NC2102085596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah has denied that it tried to attack Israeli targets using a glider. This incident caused panic among the ranks of the occupation army, which declared a state of alert in the northern villages. The Israeli warplanes flew extensive sorties over the south. Israeli helicopters also flew reconnaissance flights all along the line separating the occupied border strip and the border villages.

Lebanon: Hizballah Radio Reports Israeli Flights Over South

NC2102085196 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our correspondent in al-Nabatiyah has informed us that Zionist warplanes have been flying over the al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah at low altitudes today since 0500. The Islamic Resistance has been firing back at the warplanes with anti-aircraft weapons. The hostile planes flew extensively throughout last night and threw flares over many southern areas. At 0600 today, a few shells fired from the hostile al-Shaqif position fell on Mazra'at al-Hamra'.

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Syria: Foreign Minister Views Peace Process

MS2102095896 London INDEPENDENT in English 21 Feb 96 p 14

[Report on interview with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' by Robert Fisk in Damascus; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] "Peres is now talking about the comprehensiveness of peace in the region. This is the first time the Israelis say publicly that they want a comprehensive peace. I think this is an important sign."

Faruk al-Shara' is choosing his words with infinite care sometimes allowing seconds to slip by between nouns and verbs as he negotiates the thickets and brambles of the Syrian-Israeli talks. The Syrian foreign minister is anxious that his sentences should not be distorted for the benefit of either side in the Israeli elections — which may be why he adds a little codicil about the importance of Israel's apparent desire for a comprehensive peace: "It's a bit late," he says. "It should have been adopted a long time ago, before the Arabs took different routes in the peace process."

I didn't ask whom Mr al-Shara' wishes to win the Israeli elections, but I could guess. Both Syria and Israel appear to have concluded that there will be no peace treaty before the poll. But the peace which Syria was offering, according to Mr al-Shara' would be in Israel's interest. "It should give every side its rights — in our case, peace should return to us all the Syrian Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines — and we consider that for a peace to be comprehensive, it has to include Lebanon as well. Of course, it's difficult to speak about the others' point of view, especially when they are adversaries.

"But I think the peace we are talking about is also in the interest of the Israelis. Politically speaking, they would gain acceptance in the region and the world at large, a thing they never enjoyed before... And Israel after peace, would rid itself of a disturbed conscience, the result of its continuous occupation, the oppression of the Palestinians and the shelling of south Lebanese villages.

"What is more important... is that the Israelis cannot win in the long run if they continue in a state of war with the Arabs no matter how strong they are or will be... The Arabs are not only large in numbers and possess an immense potential, but they have a history, heritage and culture that will eventually make them victorious if wars are imposed on them."

This — though I did not say so to Mr al-Shara' — is what journalists cruelly refer to as the Saladin theory of history: since the Arabs conquered the Crusaders, so they must inevitably win against Israel. "Perhaps", one always feels like saying. Perhaps. But it was clear that the foreign minister was in optimistic mode even if he acknowledged that the Arabs have negotiated separately with Israel. Hasn't Syria been weakened by this?

"Many people might think so. But this is not the reality. If we want peace, we are stronger now than before. Yes, if we didn't want peace, we would have been weakened... But I have often said — and President al-Asad has many times said — that we are committed to peace... And if we don't sign a peace agreement, there will be no peace in the region."

Ever since President Sadat of Egypt signed a separate peace, the Syrians have understood the nature of Israel's policy towards the Arabs: divide and rule; although these, of course are not Mr al-Shara's words. "Israel does not believe in negotiating with the Arab parties simultaneously or collectively," he says. "They want to single out each Arab side. But we think this approach is wasting time... And it also has negative aspects. For example, Israel thinks it has reached a peace agreement with Jordan. For Jordan, this agreement was the outcome of 25 or 30 years of tacit, underground relations between the regime in Jordan and the Israeli leadership. So you can expect an agreement totally different from one that can be reached between Syria and Israel, where there are no secret contacts. The Israelis may say, 'Well, we want with Syria something similar to the agreement with Jordan.' But this is neither objective nor realistic. It's like a son who asks his mother to find him a bride but wants the bride to love him as though she has known him for 20 years."

Mr al-Shara' waits to see if his metaphor has been understood. Israel wants a promise of full diplomatic and trade relations the moment a treaty is signed. Syria has promised total peace in return for total withdrawal but does not believe that enemies can become trusted friends overnight. "The problem for Syria is the real intention of the Israelis. Do they really want to live in peace? Or do they want to keep on living by the sword?"

But is it not true that Israel and the West would prefer to see peace made by a weak rather than a strong Syria? Is there not, I suggested wickedly, a requirement for those who wish to make peace with Israel to be weak? Mr al-Shara' replied: "Is there an international interest... to see Syria weaker and have a weak peace in the region? Syria's position [for a comprehensive settlement] will make a strong peace in the region — which is in Israel's interest as well. If we made agreements similar to Jordan and the Palestinians, the region will never see stability. Many underground forces would oppose it. They might rule in 10 years and all these agreements will be thrown into the dustbin."

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Mr al-Shara' did not once mention the word "Islamists", but there seemed no doubt about who the "underground forces" might be.

Syria: Aggression Against Lebanon Called 'Rejection of Peace'

JN2102104396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 21 Feb 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its commentary under the headline "Aggression Against Lebanon Is Evasion From Peace," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: Israel behaves on the Lebanese front as if it rejects peace, or even talk about peace in the region. The continuous aggression against Lebanon gives the impression that Israel is trying to isolate Lebanon from its Arab environment.

AL-BA'TH adds: With every rocket fired at Lebanon, Israel searches for a pretext to justify its rejection of peace, and to satisfy the Israeli extremists who consider that the limits of peace should be in harmony with their Torah dreams and myths.

AL-BA'TH says: As long as Israel is carrying out acts of murder, destruction, and terrorism, there will be no need for reshuffling cards and ignoring facts. In such a case, it would be better for Israel to stop pursuing the policy of delusion and cheating, and of claiming that it seeks to achieve peace and stability in the region. The Israeli aggression will not stop the Lebanese people's determination to defend their national soil. If Israel believes that the Lebanese people's defense of their land is terrorism, then what does Israel call its aggression against Lebanon and its occupation of part of its southern territory?

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: The objective of Israel's daily aggressions against Lebanon is not to perpetrate crimes only, but also to pressure Lebanon to accept the Israeli protection. Here, the Israeli leaders have made a terrible mistake, for the Lebanese stand is strategic and militant. It does not compromise on its united position with Syria and its rejection of aggression and the aggressor. Just as it is difficult for Israel to force Lebanon to do what it does not like, it is also very difficult for it to undermine the Lebanese people's will of defending their land. Based on this, the Israeli talk about peace is empty, unless Israel pledges to withdraw from the occupied areas and complies with UN Security Council Resolution No. 425 as the only means to achieve security and stability in the entire region.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani Says Government Ready for Talks

LD2002165296 Tehran IRNA in English 1629 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Feb. 20, IRNA — 'Id al-Fitr prayer and the special supplications for the day were performed in strife-torn Afghanistan on Tuesday, with the people praying for restoration of peace in the country. President Borhanoddin Rabbani, in the prayer sermons at the jama' mosque in Kabul, once again announced the readiness of the Afghan government for talks with all opposing factions for creating an atmosphere of peace and brotherhood throughout the country.

He called on all groups and individuals to help the relieve the pains and sufferings of the people by participating in the talks and buring their differences.

Rabbani pointed out that the realities in Afghanistan have demonstrated that war is not the solution to the differences and that all groups in the country should fulfil their duties towards the afflicted and agonized people by helping create a broad-based government and joining in the country's reconstruction efforts.

He also called on the conflicting groups to put an end to foreign interventions and thwart them by closing ranks.

Afghanistan: Iran, Pakistan Urge Peaceful Solution to Afghan Crisis

LD1902155796 Tehran IRNA in English 1519 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 19, IRNA — Iran and Pakistan on Monday expressed concern over the continued fighting and bloodshed in Afghanistan and emphasized the need for dialogue over Afghan problem. In a joint communique issued at the end of a three-day visit to Tehran of Pakistani Deputy Foreign Minister Najmuddin Sheikh, the two countries called for a just, immediate and lasting solution to the Afghan crisis in concord with the aspiration of the Muslim people of Afghanistan.

The joint communique called on Afghan leaders to find peaceful solutions to the Afghan crisis, adding that the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan would make efforts to pave the way for a consensus among Afghan leaders to settle their disputes through peaceful means and put an end to the bloodshed in their country. The communique appreciated the ongoing peace efforts of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the United Nations in Afghanistan.

Iran and Pakistan also called for further humanitarian aid to be rendered to the Afghan people.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic of Iran hoped for improvement of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Iran and Pakistan voiced satisfaction with the current bilateral relations and called for development of Tehran-Islamabad relations.

Afghanistan: Taleban Launches Attack on Kabul City, 40 Killed

LD2002172996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Against all Islamic norms, Benazir Bhutto's Taleban launched an attack on the city of Kabul during the auspicious days of 'Id. By the grace of God and as a result of the Islamic Army's bravery, the attack was repulsed and heavy losses were inflicted on the enemy. The source added that during the attack, 40 Taleban were killed and a number of others wounded. One of the enemy's tanks was set ablaze along with its crew.

According to another report the Taleban also attempted to mount an attack from the direction of Maydanshar today [words indistinct].

Afghanistan: Government Troops on 'Full Alert' in Kabul

BK2102101196 Hong Kong AFP in English 0957 GMT 21 Feb 96

[By Marc Lavine]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, Feb 21 (AFP) — Afghan government troops were on full alert Wednesday after the fiercest battle for months between them and the Taleban militia besieging the capital, which is now anticipating a post-Ramadan offensive.

Defence officials said that about 1,000 Taleban tried to break into Kabul Tuesday during a massive ground and heavy artillery offensive aimed at taking the city which they have been besieging for five months.

During Tuesday's battle — the fiercest here in months — government jets repeatedly bombed Taleban posts at Rishkhor, which lies seven kilometers (4.3 miles) from Kabul's southern suburbs.

Observers have said that both sides had steadily reinforced their lines for several weeks ahead of the end of Ramadan and the beginning of spring, which in Afghanistan usually bring a renewal of fighting.

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The southern and southwestern front lines around Kabul, however, remained unchanged and were calm following the three-hour firefight between the two sides late Tuesday.

Government commanders at Rishkhor, the city's southern front where the battle occurred, played down the fresh outbreak of hostilities saying the offensive did not amount to a major Taleban push towards Kabul.

"Fighting was very heavy for a few hours, but the operation was not the expected final assault on Kabul, but rather a way of marking the end of a month of relative peace around the city," said one brigadier, who asked not to be named.

He and other officers said only about 500 of the Islamic warriors were deployed in the attack in which the Taleban seized — and later lost — several posts near Rishkhor.

"The Taleban had been boasting that they would celebrate the end of Ramadan in the mosques of central Kabul, so they felt obliged to make some sort of token attempt to do so," he added.

The embattled city had enjoyed a period of calm during the Moslem holy month of Ramadan which ended late Monday, a calm which observers said appeared to be over.

Tuesday's battle, which was combined with a smaller artillery and rocket skirmish on another front southwest of here, has heightened tension around Kabul, which has been bracing for a major post- Ramadan attack by one side or the other.

The raids by government jets killed 40 of the Islamic warriors and destroyed three tanks and several other vehicles, defence officials said.

The Islamic warriors, who have vowed to topple the Kabul government and install Islamic law throughout the country, meanwhile fired a volley of rockets on the city, killing at least two people and injuring three, defence and hospital officials said.

Defence officials warned that the government of beleaguered President Borhanoddin Rabbani and his military strongman 'Ahmad Shah Mas'ud would strike back hard at the Taleban if they are attacked again.

Kabul has long been subjected to regular rocket and shell barrages of the city which the government says are carried out by the Taleban from their mountain-top posts south of Kabul.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Election Commission Declares Results of 119 Constituencies

BK1602162096 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Preliminary complete results of 119 constituencies have so far been declared from yesterday's parliamentary elections. Of them, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, BNP, has won 118 seats, while one seat has gone to an Independent candidate.

The Election Commission announced in Dhaka this afternoon that the publication and broadcast of election results has been temporarily suspended due to the holy Lailatul Qadr [27th night of holy month of Ramadan] tonight. The commission also said that repolling will be held in different polling centers of 84 constituencies for various reasons. Results from 12 constituencies have not yet been received. The Election Commission has also decided to temporarily suspend the announcement of unofficial results from 35 constituencies. This decision was made as it is necessary to further examine and scrutinize the results of the elections held in these constituencies.

It may be mentioned that of a total of 300 parliamentary constituencies, candidates running in 48 constituencies have already been declared as elected uncontested. Elections has been canceled in one constituency, while they have been temporarily suspended in another constituency.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party brought out a colorful victory procession in Dhaka city today. The procession passed through various city streets chanting slogans in favor of the politics of development and production of the party. Speakers at these processions congratulated the people for again making their choice BNP and for discarding the violence and threats of the opposition parties.

Bangladesh: Election Monitoring Group Urges Cancelling Election Results

BK2002071696 Hong Kong AFP in English 0637 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, Feb 20 (AFP) — An independent group on Tuesday urged the Bangladesh chief election commissioner to cancel the country's general election last week over allegations of "mass-rigging."

The Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA), funded by western donors, said it had written urging election

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commissioner A.K.M. Sadeque to cancel the polls on grounds of "widespread rigging and ballot stuffing."

FEMA also highlighted how voter turnout had been "extremely low." Opposition parties disrupted the election which was marked by widespread violence.

"It appears that the votes cast in most of the constituencies and the declared results by the election commission do not tally," the FEMA said.

The strongly worded statement said "the election cannot be considered a mandate for those who won in view of the low turnout and malpractices."

It added: "It is a great tragedy that the entire credibility of the electoral process and integrity of the election commission have been undermined by the malpractice."

The "question of the credibility (of the elections) can not be brushed aside, it said.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP] was the only major party to contest the polls and won a landslide victory, butt has admitted there were some irregularities. But Zia has blamed opposition supporters.

Independent estimates put the voter turn out at between five and 10 percent.

Media Syndicate, a private news agency said to be pro-BNP, said Tuesday that the turnout was estimated from 155 seats during the elections at 25.66 percent.

Zia has also blamed a section of the press for not reporting objectively on the elections.

Bangladesh: Prime Minister Offers To Hold Dialogue With Opposition

BK1902024496 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has offered a fresh call to the opposition political parties to hold discussions to resolve the country's political problems. She was addressing a post-election news conference at the International Conference Center in Dhaka yesterday. The prime minister expressed her belief that it will be possible to hold future elections with participation of all political parties through negotiations.

Replying to questions on midterm elections and an opposition demand for caretaker government and her resignation, the prime minister said anything and everything can be discussed at the negotiation table and decided upon.

Referring to the various programs and threats given by a section of opposition parties, she said these are not democratic language. These will not bring good either for democracy or even for themselves. She said there was a parliamentary form of government and a Constitution in the country. The present government has always been legal and it is still very much legal. The state affairs will be run according to the law of the land by the present government. Nobody should take law into their own hands. Nothing illegal will be allowed; in that case law will take its own course. She said the executive power is vested in the prime minister under the present Constitution. The government officials will [word indistinct] to their activities as per directives of the prime minister.

Regarding economic and administrative reforms in the country, the prime minister said these were never stopped altogether and it will continue.

Information and Commerce Minister M. Shamsul Islam was present on the occasion.

India

India: Rao Hopes U.S. Not To 'Impose' Arms Race in Region

BK2002164096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has said that the country would not like to be forced into a situation where it will have to divert scare resources from development to defense. Mr. Narasimha Rao was talking to the visiting U.S. Congressman, Mr. Bill Richardson, in New Delhi today. Mr. Rao expressed the hope that friends of India and the United States would work to strengthen the process of peace, stability and development in the region and not impose an arms race by supplying weapons to Pakistan. He told Mr. Richardson that India is concentrating on its economic reforms. The U.S. Congressman said he has come to India to further strengthen Indo-U.S. cooperation. He will be visiting Jammu and Kashmir to study the hostage issue from the humanitarian angle.

India: German Journalists Appeal for Release of Kashmir Hostages

BK2002162096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Two prominent journalists from Germany have appealed to the militant outfit Al-Faran to set free the hostages on humanitarian grounds on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr. In a statement to the local press in Srinagar today, the journalists hoped that Al-Faran will respect their sentiments by releasing the hostages without any further delay.

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[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1315 GMT on 20 February reports from Srinagar that two German human rights activists offered to trade places with the four Western tourists held hostage in Kashmir for the past eight months and said they planned to meet with the kidnappers soon.

[The AFP report says: "Peter von Zschinsky and James Sec of United Humanitas, a German-based human rights group, told AFP in this Kashmir summer capital that they had been contacted by the abductors, the separatist group Al-Faran, on Tuesday.

["They said they would be leaving for southern Kashmir in the next day or so for a meeting with members of the group, which is holding Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan, American Donald Hutchings and German Dirk Hasert."

[The AFP report continues: "Earlier Tuesday, the two Germans appealed to Al-Faran to release the hostages and said they were willing to be exchanged for the four. 'If Al-Faran desires it can take us hostage for the release of the four foreigners,' Zschinsky said.

["The pair, who arrived here several days ago, said their offer was a purely private initiative and had the blessing of the families of the hostages. 'We are in direct contact with the families of the hostages and they are happy with our move,' Sec said.

["'We are doing this purely on humanitarian grounds,' Zschinsky added. He said they planned to remain in Srinagar for another 10 days or so."]

India: Kashmir Organization Leaders 'Manhandled' by Irate Mob

BK2102091596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The JKLF [Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front] leaders Yasin Malik and Shakeel Bakshi were manhandled by an irate mob while they were trying to address a prayer meeting at the Idgah [place for offering 'Id al-Fitr prayers] in Anantnag today. An official spokesman told our Srinagar correspondent that when Malik stood up to address the gathering, the people shouted slogans against him and the [All Parties] Hurriyat Conference and beat them up. They were demanding that the assassins of south Kashmir Mir Waiz [religious leader] Dr. Qazi Nissar be produced and punished. Both of them were later admitted to a hospital in Srinagar.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 0757 GMT on 21 February carries a Srinagar datelined report that says: "A top Muslim separatist leader was shot and wounded Wednesday by suspected renegade militants in the northern Indian state of Kashmir, his family said.

["Yasin Malik, chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), was rushed to an army hospital after being shot in Anantnag, some 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of Srinigar, family members said.

["Malik was later shifted to the main hospital in this summer capital of Kashmir, but doctors refused to give details."]

India: Further on Attack Against Kashmir Organization Leaders

BK2102095596 Hong Kong AFP in English 0934 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SRINAGAR, India, Feb 21 (AFP) — A top Muslim separatist leader was Wednesday attacked and seriously injured along with two German rights activists by suspected renegade militants in Kashmir, his aides said.

Yasin Malik, chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), was badly beaten up with sticks and rifle butts by 20 to 30 men in the town of Anantnag, some 50 kilometers (31 miles) south of here, witnesses said.

The attackers, believed to be pro-India militants, also injured Shakeel Ahmed, general secretary of JKLF, and the two Germans who Tuesday offered to trade places with four Western tourists held hostage in Kashmir.

Malik and Ahmed were rushed in a taxi from Anantnag to Srinagar and hospitalised. A doctor attending to them said the 32-year-old JKLF chief was unconscious with head injuries.

Malik's family had earlier said he had been shot and wounded by the renegades.

Mohammed Ashraf and Mohammed Yusuf, two of Malik's aides who witnessed the attack, said the gunmen assaulted the Germans, Peter von Zschinsky and James Sec of United Humanitas Nothilfe, a German-based human rights group.

"The two Germans were also beaten up and their cameras were confiscated," Ashraf told AFP at Srinagar's SMHS hospital where the two Kashmiri leaders were admitted. "We don't know where the (Germans) are."

The JKLF is the premier separatist group in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, where more than 12,000 people have died in a bloody drive to end New Delhi's rule.

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Malik, one of the most popular leaders in the strife-torn Kashmir Valley, had gone to Anantnag with Bakshri to address a mass prayer meeting for the Eid festival.

On Tuesday, the two Germans said they were willing to be exchanged for the four Western hostages — an American, a German and two Britons — being held by the Al-Faran militant group since July last year.

India: Two Union Ministers Resign Over Money Scandal 20 Feb

BK2002162396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Two more union ministers, Mr. Buta Singh and Mr. Arvind Netam, today resigned from the Council of Ministers. The civil supplies minister, Mr. Buta Singh, met the prime minister in New Delhi this evening and submitted his resignation. An official spokesman has said that Mr. Buta Singh's resignation has been forwarded to the president for acceptance.

The minister of state for agriculture, Mr. Arvind Netam, in his resignation letter addressed to the prime minister during the day said that the hawala [illegal money transfer] case has created unnecessary and unmerited embarrassment and therefore he is tendering his resignation on moral grounds. With this, six ministers have resigned from the Union Council of Ministers following allegations that their names figure in the Jain hawala diary. The textiles minister, Mr. Kamal Nath, resigned yesterday, while Dr. Bal Ram Jakhar, Mr. Madhavrao Scindia, and Mr. V.C. Shukla tendered their resignations last month.

The Congress-I says that the union ministers whose names figure in the diary of the Jains in hawala case are free to decide for themselves whether to remain in the ministry or not. Responding to a query, the Congress-I spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, told newspersons in New Delhi today that the party has made it clear not to give any advice or directive to the ministers and it is for each individual to decide for himself.

Iran

Iran: Khamene'i Gives Sermon on World Affairs, Elections

NC2002091596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0525 GMT 20 Feb 96

[Sermon by Ayatollah 'Ali Hoseyni Khamene'i at the 'Id al-Fitr prayers held at the Imam Khomeyni Mosalla in Tehran—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] I will cover two issues in my second sermon, and we will speak briefly on both subjects. The first issue concerns the situation of the Muslims around the world and the second concerns current important domestic issues.

As far as the world Muslims are concerned, what is truly a source of regret and pain is the fact that the Muslims today are paying less attention to what they need the most: a return to Islam and self-reliance, Islamic strength, the consolidation of the bonds among Muslims, and Muslim unity. Today the Muslims need these more than ever before, because the enemies of Islam have adopted a harsher and even a more blatant stand against Islam. In the past too there was a great degree of enmity and hostility toward Islam, but the enmity is harsher, more open, and more hostile today.

At the head of these enemies is the sinister alliance of America and Zionism—America as the head of world arrogance, and Zionism as the author of political corruption, obstructions to the Muslims' relations with each other, and obstructions to the development and progress of Islamic peoples and countries. These two are united.

Unfortunately the stand that most of the heads of states of countries that were expected to adopt a correct stand vis-a-vis the usurpers of Palestine—that is, the countries in the Arab region— have taken toward this overt and impudent aggression is one that weakens the Muslims more and more each day in the face of that sinister alliance. It also weakens the governments themselves.

O that the heads of the Islamic countries would realize the value of Islam, which gives them power, dignity, independence, and the strength to resist bullying. But unfortunately most of the Muslim leaders do not know what this blessing is worth. Islam can strengthen the Islamic countries with the help of faith, the divine and luminous teachings of Islam, and progressive Islamic decrees. Islam can create such power in each country that no one can bully that people or country or to impose anything on them. Why do they not use this immense strength?

One day the usurping Zionists came—with the support of the top colonialist power in the world in those days, that is, the British— and grabbed a corner in the heart of the Islamic countries, in the sensitive area of Palestine. And then they formed a government, ousted the landlords. Then they attacked in this direction and that direction, expanding their territories until they occupied the entire land of Palestine, part of Jordan, part of Lebanon, and part of Syria. Their usurpation is not limited to Palestine today. If they can, they will once again continue this aggression and this expansionism. But the world conditions are not suitable for them today. They are waiting. And when they feel that the conditions

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around them are right, if they can they will continue their aggression.

They are not satisfied with what they have today. They believe that the land as far as Medina belongs to them. They believe that the land as far as the Euphrates belongs to them. They want an immense country that has sufficient water resources. They want to have economic, political, military, social, and other influence over all the countries around them and over the entire Middle East. They are not satisfied with what they have today.

There are those who think that if they have sit at the negotiating table with the aggressive Zionists—under America's pressures and force—they would free themselves of the confrontation with this usurping aggressor. But it will not let them be. And even if it would, they do not have any right to give up territory that belongs to the Muslims and to the Palestinian nation merely with their signatures and their talks held under Israeli pressure.

Now that the usurping Zionists in Palestine have freed themselves of the attacks by the Arab armies which, until a few years ago, threatened them, they are thinking about imposing other economic and political pressures on the other countries—and again with American pressure.

The Americans are applying the various pressures that they have at their disposal against each and every country around Palestine and even on countries that are farther away. They are resorting to political weapons—the weapon of human rights—and using economic pressure by interfering in international forums, at the United Nations and in international economic institutions. They exert so much pressure on these governments and countries that those weak governments that have no relations with Israel will have to establish relations, and those that already have relations will have to strengthen them. They are actually forcing them so that in order to clear the way for usurping Israel to enter those countries and begin economic and commercial activities so they can dominate the resources and wealth of the countries. This is a great danger that is threatening the Muslims today.

Of course, the cancerous tumor that is growing is that of the usurping Israel, Zionism. But the hand that is helping it is the leader of world arrogance—that is, the American Government. The Muslim nations should not forget this, in the same way that our dear, brave, zealous, and alert nation has shown by its words and deeds, with its participation on the political scene, and with its activeness everywhere—a necessary activeness—that it will not tolerate American pressure and that it can turn the American pressures into a punch in the mouth for America itself. [crowd shouts: "God is great," "Death to America," and "Death to Israel"]

You punched America in the mouth, as well as the enemies of the revolution, and those who want to erase the name of Palestine and of holy Jerusalem from our minds. In this month of Ramadan—on 22 Bahman [11 February, the anniversary of the Islamic revolution] and on the last Friday of the month of Ramadan, Jerusalem Day—the Iranian nation displayed all the zeal, courage, and faith that characterizes this nation around the world and showed that it is standing up for itself.

Well done, Iranian people. Bravo for all this zeal, enthusiasm, and faith. Bravo for this alertness and awareness. Bravo for your ability to understand when the proper time and occasion arises. This year you marked Jerusalem Day and probably 22 Bahman more zealously than previous years. This shows the Iranian people's awareness. It is clear that the Iranian people know that this year their presence on the scene is even more necessary because of the unfavorable situation of the Muslims and because of the daily- increasing aggression by the enemies of Islam. And you displayed this activeness. May God be satisfied with you, may the holy heart of the Imam of the Ages be happy that you understand well, act well, discern well, and do well. Other peoples should learn from our people. The governments, too, should realize what this great blessing—the blessing of Islam and of Islamic nations—is worth.

The second issue concerns our domestic circumstances. With God's blessings, this country is moving ahead. The government is striving, the officials are striving, and the people are striving; and they are reconstructing the country—both through economic reconstruction and by establishing the necessary foundations in this country morally and culturally. Of course, the enemy is doing its best to prevent this, to infiltrate, to inflict blows. It is engaged in a constant onslaught. But, in return, much is being done; and with God's help, these efforts will continue. Both the officials who are working and serving with faith, interest, expertise, and efficiency; and people in the various sectors should continue and are continuing their efforts.

Another event that is approaching is the elections. I would once again like to tell everyone that the elections are important. The Majles is important. A strong Majles is important. A pious and revolutionary Majles is important. A Majles that can understand and recognize these aspirations and be faithful to them is important. And the lack of such a Majles, its weakness, or its obstruction could result in great damage being inflicted on the nation.

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You can form a good Majles through your awareness and your care. Examine and understand the people you are sending to the Majles. Anyone who is elected to the Majles as a deputy of this nation, a deputy of a revolutionary nation, a deputy of a pious nation, a deputy of a brave nation, should be revolutionary, pious, and courageous. If we do not find the most courageous, most pious, and most revolutionary, at least he should be able to measure up to the great masses of people who are shining so much.

Anyone who does not like Islam and does not accept Islamic strictures pleases the hearts of the foreigners. Anyone who insults the revolution and revolutionary values does so to satisfy others or out of fear of others. Anyone who favors the enemy instead of our people, who lacks the necessary piety, and is not devoted to moral issues but to worldly issues wants to undertake this responsibility as a deputy only to gain status and rank and to serve his personal interests. He is not fit to have this responsibility.

Look for pious, courageous, and revolutionary people, people who can safeguard the strength of this nation under the aegis of revolutionary values and who will approve laws, adopt stands, and deliver speeches that will all be for that purpose. Such a person is fit to act as a Majles deputy of this nation.

A deputy should understand what the Imam said, what he wanted, and what enraged him. He should understand that great man—a man whose grandeur, sincerity, strength, and courage were characteristics that even his enemies admitted—and someone who was able to free a weak and dependent Iran from the clutches of corrupt people and corrupt and dependent managers and to place it into the hands of the people. He should understand that the imam was a person who was able to direct the future of this nation and to unite it on the path to this great objective. They should walk on the path of the imam and follow the line of the imam. Do not forget the line of the imam. Do not forget the imam's values. Do not forget the imam's will. Seek what these values teach you about a person. And when you find such a person, vote for him with God's blessings.

This will be a Majles which is fit for you—for this nation. This is the way you should go about things.

Thank God, the Majles has performed well in the past four terms. Of course, there have always been different types of people, different types of ideas, and different types of political tastes in this Majles. Even people representing religious minorities who were not Muslims sat next to their Muslim compatriots and worked and served in this Majles. Everyone has worked for the good and power of the Islamic Republic, which is the power of the Iranian people and the grandeur of Iran. In this Majles term too I know that Almighty God will help you and bless you. The Majles will be a good Majles. The people's participation, with God's help, will be good. This nation, this enthusiasm, this faith, this motivation, this ability to recognize the enemy, and this ability to tell when the opportunity is right will not allow the enemy to achieve their objectives.

The enemy wants the Majles to be weak. The enemy does not want the elections to take place or for the elections to be zealous and enthusiastic, but for there to be a low voter turnout. They do not want so see occur that which is necessary for this nation. But this nation will not allow this to happen. [crowd shouts: "Death to America"]

God's blessings on the imam, God's blessings on you the people. God's blessings on the sympathetic and pious officials. God's blessings on those who will guide the people onto the correct path. And God's blessings on all who follow this road.

Iran: Turkey's 'Instability' Said To Increase Regional Tensions

NC2102114896 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 13 Feb 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "Turkey: Unstable and Confused"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Elections and the formation of a parliament naturally help countries establish political stability and create favorable conditions from the political and social standpoint. But apparently this general rule does not apply to all countries, because the parliamentary elections in Turkey were unable to fulfill such expectations.

There is no stable government in Turkey now, and the situation is not clear. Tansu Ciller's cabinet has resigned, but she will continue to be in charge until a new cabinet is formed. Facts show, however, that Tansu Ciller's half-baked government is unable to tend correctly to affairs and that it is possibly trying to aggravate intentionally the situation so that the future cabinet will inherit ruins. Although months have passed since parliamentary elections were held, the situation is still unclear. This is what led to the emergence of a type of confusion and disintegration in affairs and decisions.

Overt and covert hands, most of which receive their orders from the West, are busy making the situation in Turkey tenser and are trying to upset Turkey's relations with its neighbors. Western embassies and American centers have been doing their best to muddy the waters in Turkey so that they may fish from them. But is the

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continuation of this situation to the benefit of Turkey and the region?

Recently, astonishing incidents have taken place in Turkey. A number of mercenaries from the terrorist monafeqin [pejorative for the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization] mini-group received vast support in their efforts to stage anti-Iranian demonstrations on the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution. And this terrorist mini-group has a criminal record for crimes against each and every member of the Iranian nation.

It is not in the interest of the Turkish Government and nation for some people, who receive orders from America, to take advantage of the "power vacuum" in Turkey and use this tattered weapon to upset good relations between two countries. Turkey is suffering from a power vacuum these days, and naturally one would expect its experts and observers to sit down and think of rapid, effective, and efficient ways to bring Turkey out of the crisis and end the political instability and confusion.

But let us not forget that if foreign hands are left to operate freely, some may be enticed into fomenting a crisis and upsetting relations between Turkey and its neighbors.

Meanwhile, on the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic revolution of Iran, which is marked each year in Turkey, two outstanding political figures and scholars were present.

Mr. Necmettin Erbakan, leader of Turkey's Welfare Party, delivered a speech at this ceremony. Everyone knows that Mr. Erbakan and his party enjoy popularity and strong backing in Turkish society. Naturally, his presence at the anniversary of the largest revolution of the current century was a legitimate, logical, and understandable act. However, some hireling mass media and people whose intentions are known and who receive an allowance from the American and Israeli Embassies in Turkey, have begun a spiteful propaganda campaign and are creating an anti-Iranian atmosphere, as well as disseminating poisonous propaganda against Mr. Erbakan.

We should not ignore the fact that, on one hand, this poisonous propaganda is for "domestic consumption" in Turkey, that it is "multi-faceted propaganda" for the hireling pen-pushers to prove to the American and Israeli embassies that their money has not been wasted and that they are precisely working in the direction that Washington and Tel Aviv want. On the other hand, facts show that another round of elections in Turkey is inevitable and that naturally Erbakan's opponents, who were disgraced by their defeat in the recent elections, are trying to create commotion and poisonous propaganda against Turkey's Islamic faction in order to sway public opinion.

They even accuse Erbakan of dependence on forces abroad, this at a time when it is they who are receiving orders from foreign embassies and acting on orders from America and the Zionists.

The secular groups, and some people of known intentions, may think that they can gain something out of their commotion and hue and cry against Iran and the Islamic movements in Turkey. But the experience of recent years, and especially the experience of the recent elections in Turkey, have shown that such steps by the secularists have an "anti-propaganda" effect—with consequences precisely to their own detriment.

Apart from all these, our Foreign Ministry recently summoned the Turkish ambassador and pointed out some issues to him. Although it is possible to guess what the contents of this meeting were, it is not very clear whether the necessary warnings were also given about Turkey's political instability. If the answer to this is negative, then it is necessary to immediately summon the Turkish ambassador to the foreign ministry once again and clarify to him that the impact of Turkey's current political instability and crisis on bilateral relations. This instability cannot be accepted and tolerated by us and we expect the current political crisis in Turkey to be rapidly ended, so that Turkey's neighbors can feel they are dealing with responsible, understanding, logical, and far-sighted people in Turkey who do not put the interests of foreigners before the interests of Turkey.

Iran: Protests, Unrest in Bahrain Viewed

NC2002130296 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 12 Feb 96 p 14

[Unattributed report: "Critical Days in Bahrain"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Bahrain has been the scene of unrest and popular protests for the second time this year. Instead of studying the reasons for this unrest and finding solutions, the government of the emirate is continuing its suppression of the people.

Reports from Bahrain indicate that people's protests in the emirate have intensified. Security forces are using plastic bullets and tear gas against the protestors, wounding many people. The number of people killed in the recent clashes has not yet been announced by the government.

The Bahraini Government reported last month on the arrest of eight well-known personalities of the emirate, including Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri, one of Bahrain's

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renowned preachers. The government stated that these leaders were involved in the people's protests against the govrnment.

A Bahraini Interior Ministry official has stated that "the arrest of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri and seven others was aimed at thwarting a criminal plan supported from abroad that was aimed at spreading fear among the people and destroying their property. He stated that a wave of arsons, explosions, and subversion had spread throughout the capital. The Bahraini officials then warned the opposition against delivering speeches in the mosques as they did at the outset of the unrest last month. The ministry has referred to the religious speeches in the mosques as means of instigating the unrest against the government.

Following the intensification of clashes, explosions, and arsons in Manama, the emirates' 8,000-strong army stated its readiness to crush the Bahraini people's protests. Bahrain's Defense Ministry officials then met with officials of the Interior Ministry and stated that the general command of the Army fully supports the Interior Ministry's efforts to establish security and that it is ready to take the necessary steps to end the unrest once and for all.

News agencies have reported that during the past two weeks Bahrain's security forces have arrested 2,000 people during the recent unrest and in a bid to stifle the people's cries.

Following the increasing violence in Bahrain, the shaykhdoms of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Kuwait have expressed support for Bahrain and have strongly condemned the current popular movement.

Other Arab countries such as Jordan, Yemen, and Egypt, as well as the Arab League, which receives financial assistance from the Persian Gulf shaykhs, have all expressed solidarity with the Bahraini Government and have condemned the people's protest against the Al Khalifah regime.

In letters to the Arab heads, the Bahraini Amir has requested their support and briefed them on the dangerous situation in the emirate.

Last month's clashes in Bahrain have terrified the regional shaykhs, and the mass media in these countries have strongly attacked the protesting people, calling them instruments in the hands of foreigners and demanding that they be crushed by the Bahraini Government.

For the first time on 30 Dey [20 January], Qatari television carried an interview with two leaders of the Bahraini opposition. The airing of this interview enraged the heads of the emirate. According to experts on Bahraini affairs, this interview had a great impact on the people of Bahrain and led to the exacerbation of the popular protests against the Al Khalifah regime.

The airing of this interview caused great tension in the relations between Bahrain and Qatar, and the Bahraini Government filed an official protest against Qatar. The Bahraini Government also called on other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] to condemn this unprecedented act by Qatar.

The GCC members, who were also enraged over this situation, strongly condemned the airing of this interview. [passage omitted]

The opponents of the Bahraini Government are generally calling for political and economic reforms, the just distribution of wealth, the revival of the law and the parliament, and the release of the political prisoners.

Reasons for dissent by the Bahraini people include the following: bans on political and religious activities; banning the activities of parties; limiting basic freedoms, namely the freedom of speech and the press; the continuing arrest of freedom-seekers and Muslim youths; preventing people from traveling abroad; exiling active Muslims; and the key role played by foreigners, namely by the Americans, in the management of the country and of the Army. [passage omitted]

The Bahraini rulers, who rule the people with the support of foreigners, especially the Americans, explain the issue as being between Sunnis and Shiites in a bid to get sympathy from people in the other Arab countries. They allege that it is only the Shiites in Bahrain who have risen against the Al Khalifah regime, but the oppression by the Al Khalifah regime is not only against the Shiites but also the other Muslims in the shaykhdom.

Every time the Bahraini shaykhs encounter a popular movement, they respond by accusing neighboring countries of involvement. Recent accusations by Bahraini newspapers against Iran have been ridiculed by others, but the Al Khalifah shaykhs know better than anyone else that these accusations are empty, baseless, and false. It is the people who are resisting the security forces and the Al Khalifah regime's army with their bare hands and are demanding their legitimate rights.

It is better for the Al Khalifah regime to display foresight and not to confront its neighbors on spurioius pretexts. It should realize that the foreign countries rush to their assistance only because they have ulterior motives and that it is the countries within the region that should assist and support each other and not allow the foreigners to interfere in the region's affairs. The

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Bahraini shaykhs should accept the fact that the people's demands are legitimate and legal, and that their demands for participation in the management of the country, in forming a parliament, and in freedom of speech and of pen are among the most basic demands of any people. The Al Khalifah regime should not reject the people's most elementary demands and confront them with the bayonet. The Al Khalifah shaykhs should come to their senses and understand that it was their bad policies toward the people's just and legitimate rights that resulted in the recent popular uprising.

At the outset of their recent movement, the people of Bahrain held peaceful demonstrations demanding political and social reforms; however, it was the Bahraini regime's obstinate stand and the use of arms and tear gas against the people which caused them to alter their stands and confront the government forces.

Iran: Roundtable Discussion on Election Procedure

LD2002211396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1457 GMT 20 Feb 96

[Roundtable discussion on the forthcoming Majles elections with 'Ali Reza Tabesh, deputy interior minister for political affairs and the head of the elections headquarters, Ahmad Alizadeh, a jurist member of the Guardian Council, and an unidentified moderator — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Moderator] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Greetings, dear compatriots and honorable viewers. As you know, we are approaching the elections for the fifth term of the Islamic Consultative Majles. [passage omitted]

In order to inform you of the way the elections will be held, we have produced a series of programs, the first of which is being broadcast tonight.

The dear guests of tonight's program are our dear, honorable brothers, His Excellency 'Ali Reza Tabesh, the deputy interior minister in charge of political affairs and the head of the country's elections headquarters, and His Excellency Ahmad Alizadeh, a jurist member of the Guardian Council. I welcome them both and thank them for being the guest of the program. [passage omitted]

Your Excellency Mr. Tabesh, before I ask a question on the role played by the Interior Ministry in the elections, I would like to ask you a question about the number of Majles deputies and the way they are spread in the country. Does their number depend on a region's geographic situation, or does it depend on the number of a region's population, or on both? Is the number of deputies always constant, or can it be changed according to the growth in population?

[Tabesh] Following the victory of the revolution we have always had a constant rule about how we divide the 270 deputies over the 196 constituencies, and nothing has changed so far. Therefore, the number of any constituency's deputies is decided by the law. The geographic boundaries of any constituency, as determined by the divisions of the country, are interpreted by us as constituency boundaries, which are again determined by the law. For example, the boundaries of the Tehran constituency, which include the towns of Tehran, Shemiranat, Eslamshahr, and Shahr-e Rey, are also determined by the law. From the very beginning, and since the enactment of the law by the Revolution Council, on the way the number of deputies is spread, every election has been held in the same way. This method of spreading has always been the same, but in the divisions of the country some constituencies have undergone some change. Therefore, the way we spread the 270 deputies is according to the law and we cannot change the way it is divided at all.

[Moderator] Thank you. Now, a question for Mr. Alizadeh. Please tell us about the special characteristics of elected Majles deputies, bearing in mind the kind of government in Iran, which is an Islamic republic.

[Alizadeh] In an introduction to the constitution written by the experts on the constitution, which included a number of esteemed officials of the system, we can read that the government of the country is in the hands of the pious. [passage omitted]

[Moderator] Mr. Tabesh, I would like to ask you to tell us what is the role of the Interior Ministry in the elections, and also what are the responsibilities of the State Elections Headqurters, as the head of which you are on this program?

[Tabesh] Basically, by law the Interior Ministry is in charge of organizing the elections all over the country. [passage omitted]

The importance of the elections is clear to everyone. One of the most important tasks in the country is holding elections. The executor of that important task is the Interior Ministry, and its supervision is up to the Guardian Council. [passage omitted]

In addition, the Interior Ministry has a special task. That is to supervise the constituencies. The interior minister has set up a team of inspectors, which supervises elections in various constituencies.

The State Elections Headquarters, which was set up at the Interior Ministry, has in fact organized the procedure so that the elections are held in the best possible manner, in accordance with the law and the elections regulations. [passage omitted]

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For the information of the dear viewers there are about 500,000 people active to enable us to vote on polling day. We have 30,000 polling stations all over the country. [passage omitted]

[Moderator] You said that the Interior Ministry has assigned inspectors to oversee the elections, to make sure the elections are held properly. You also mentioned that the Guardian Council too has inspectors to oversee the elections. I would like to ask whether there are other inspectors assigned by other bodies? And whether the law has allowed for that?

[Tabesh] By law, supervision is the right of the Guardian Council. It is stated in the law, and Mr. Alizadeh will provide the necessary explanations. The supervision team, set up by the honorable interior minister, is in accordance with Article 25 of the law. [passage omitted] The inspectors do not have the right to interfere.

[Moderator] Mr. Tabesh. Excuse me for interrupting, my question was, other than inspectors appointed by the Interior Ministry, has any other ministry or body assigned inspectors to supervise the elections?

[Tabesh] The president has also set up a unit of inspectors under our dear brother, Mr. Mohshen Hashemi. He will conduct some form of inspection and report the results directly to the honorable president. The team of inspectors will receive regular reports from us and the constituencies. Perforce, they will send inspectors to constituencies.

[Moderator] Thank you. Mr. Alizadeh, would you be kind enough to tell us about the role and responsibility of the Guardian Council?

[Alizadeh] Under Article 99 of the constitution the Guardian Council is responsible for overseeing the Majles and presidential elections, census taking, and other matters. [passage omitted] The Guardian Council is an impartial body. Although the executive machinery consists of the trustees of the people, in any case, if an overseer for a trustee is assigned by the law, it is to make sure the task is carried out to the full and to assure the people who participate in determining their own fate at the elections, and who wish to make sure that the elections are held properly.

The members of the central committee for supervision of elections for the fifth term of the Majles are all Guardian Council members, two of the clerical members and three of the jurists. And I am also a members of the central supervisory committee.

Under the law, the central supervisory committee selects provincial supervisory committees from among trusted, eligible, notable, pious, and fair people. And eventually supervisory committees for provincial capitals are selected. As Mr. Tabesh has mentioned, ballot box supervisors are also selected by the Guardian Council. The Guardian Council overseers are present and supervise all stages of the elections. [passage omitted]

Iran: Karrubi on Election Priorities, Results

NC1902205896 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 8 Feb 96 p 14

["Text" of an "exclusive" interview with Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Karrubi, former speaker of the Majles, by unidentified reporter; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Reporter] We thank you for giving this newspaper the opportunity to interview you. My first question is on your opinion of the Majles elections and the role they play in the country's political developments and political independence.

[Karrubi] In the name of God, the almighty and merciful. I would like to thank JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI for having given me this opportunity and I would like to state that the Constitution is our national heritage. It is the strongest and most major pillar of the Islamic Republic. A large part of the Constitution has to do with the Majles and its position in the system. The Majles enjoys a lofty position and is known as the "center of gravity of the system's decision-making." [passage omitted]

[Reporter] Since, as you have pointed out, the Majles is the center of gravity of the country's decision-making, what role does a deputy have in this decision-making and what should the people consider when voting for candidates?

[Karrubi] The more important a job, the more comprehensive and higher the requirements are for choosing efficient people. Naturally people whom we expect to play an effective role in the Majles should be carefully selected so that they can carry out this important job. A Majles deputy should be virtuous, committed, and alert. He should also be capable of analyzing domestic and foreign issues so that he can understand the most complicated issues and make a decision on them on the nation's behalf. Naturally the more experienced the members of the Majles are, the better the services it can offer. Let us not forget that virtue, commitment, being one of the people, and having revolutionary characteristics make the people invulnerable. [passage omitted]

[Reporter] You have referred to commitment and expertise and have stated that the former is something that all Majles deputies should have. How determining a role does expertise play in the creation of an efficient, strong, alert, and prudent Majles?

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[Karrubi] Commitment is a definite and general issue. Basically commitment, virtue, and justness are not only special characteristics needed by the Majles, but a general need for the entire country. [passage omitted]

As for expertise, this is a serious and undeniable need that will help the Majles to understand the complications and subtleties of decision-making under the current conditions in the country, the region, and the world and to adopt correct, timely, effective, and suitable decisions to answer society's and the country's needs today and tomorrow.

The Majles is not a place for training. The people who join the Majles should be sufficiently experienced and capable. And the stronger and more efficient the deputies are, the better the Majles can operate. I think that only an experienced Majles can solve complicated problems.

[Reporter] How determining a role does this special requirement for expertise play in the Majles the more complicated the issues and problems become?

[Karrubi] This is a very good question. I was in the Majles for 12 years and was speaker for two terms. I came to realize very well that in time simple issues are solved more easily and that complicated issues require expertise and more specialized perspectives. This is why I believe that our Majles should gradually become more specialized.

[Reporter] A topic being discussed in the country today in relation to the elections is what a favorable Majles is. Is it a Majles with only one way of thinking or a is it a Majles that is balanced as far as views are concerned?

[Karrubi] Once again I refer to experience and say that the Majles should be balanced so that it can be effective and active. The more this balance is upset to the benefit of one faction—no matter which faction—the more the Majles will move toward indifference toward the people's problems.

[Reporter] What does balance mean in your opinion? What are the characteristics of a balanced Majles?

[Karrubi] A balanced Majles is one where there are deputies representing the current ideas and thoughts in society. A one-sided Majles is irrelevant. This was a slogan voiced by Bani-Sadr during the first term. In other words, he wanted everyone to be obedient to him. We know that a one-sided Majles faces more problems. When there is a vast spectrum of accepted ideas in a society and when each idea has a considerable number of supporters, it is natural for the Majles to be the manifestation of the nation's views and to reflect that vast spectrum of ideas. Do all our people think the same way so that the Majles will be the same, too? If the objective is to have a one-sided Majles, then first the people should be made to think one way so that this will be reflected in the Majles.

One-sided thinking is meaningless. Even in a family with several members you see that there are different opinions. It is no problem for opportunities to be given to people with various ideas to advance in society. These are the foundations for society's growth.

[Reporter] Then what happens to unity?

[Karrubi] Please do not be hasty. I will get to that point, too. This is a subtle issue that requires concentration. When a nation, a society, a group, and even a gathering of a few people are united in principle and have agreed on how to safeguard these principles, what is wrong with giving opportunities so that other opinions and views can be voiced? Who is harmed by the existence of various views and opinions? Unity and the existence of various views are not opposites. When danger is felt, everyone—that is, all the people with different views—are transformed into a "common power." This is what we mean by unity.

Do not be mistaken. It is wrong for us to think that unity means that everyone thinks alike. Thoughts and views are not something that someone can order and say that everyone should think alike.

In short, a balanced Majles is the natural reflection of society's votes. If we put short-sightedness aside, you will see that the people's votes and the composition of the fifth Majles will be a balanced Majles made up of people who represent the ideas that are accepted by society. This is the best way to ensure unity, the country's independence, the system's strength, and the vitality of revolutionary spirit in a society where people with various ideas that are accepted by this society can feel that people who represent their ideas are part of the Majles. And this will lead to political zeal in society and will ensure that people with various thoughts and ideas will have a guaranteed presence on the political scene. But when someone sees that the deputy representing his way of thinking is not in the Majles, he will gradually become disenchanted and will no longer have any reason to participate. [passage omitted]

[Reporter] Recently there were rumors that some people were worried that the bitter incidents which occurred during the Constitutional Movement would be repeated and that the clergymen would be removed from the scene. Are you worried about this? What is your opinion?

[Karrubi] This concern is baseless because the religious 'ulema enjoy public support. Clericism in the sense of

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the 'ulema exists in the seminaries, in the universities, and in society and is a deep-rooted phenomenon. This dates back 150 years but has, of course, had its ups and downs. Even when clericism was under pressure and even when it was suppressed, it quickly revived and grew in strength and power. Even during times of suppression, it was still active. Therefore, clericism is not a phenomenon that anybody can remove. This phenomenon is linked with the people's religion. [passage omitted]

There are some people who want clericism to be completely removed from the political arena. Do not forget that plots to remove the clerics from the scene are being hatched outside the country. But none of these efforts are new and, thanks to the people's vigilance, such plots have been and are being thwarted. Of course, maintaining society's acceptance of clericism is something that everyone should strive for.

[Reporter] Since we are approaching the Majles elections, how do you think the people's zeal and enthusiasm for the elections can be increased?

[Karrubi] Fortunately, new activities have made the elections scene more zealous. I will discuss the general situation. Conditions should be created for suitable people to recognize their responsibilities and enter the scene. A healthy competition should be created so that everyone will realize that what counts is the people's votes. This feeling will increase the people's incentives to participate in the elections. Also, the people should feel that every single vote has an impact on the outcome of the elections. They should not think that their votes have no impact. They should believe that their votes will determine the composition and fabric of the Majles. [passage omitted]

The healthier the election atmosphere, the more responsibility the people will feel and the will participate with more motivation. The principle of the system and the revolution will be further strengthened, and you can rest assured that the spirits of the Imam and of our martyrs will be happier.

[Reporter] What impact do the political motivations of groups have under the current conditions?

[Karrubi] The more groups increase their presence and activities, the more they will attract supporters to the scene. A group that does not have any legal problems should not be restricted. If groups with supporters in a town or a city have no legal problems, no one should prevent them from acting and thus spread disappointment among the supporters.

As to whether this is good or not, let the people choose with their votes. No one should consider himself to be the guardian of the people. This is a patronizing attitude that can harm the impartiality of the officials and the healthiness of the elections.

[Reporter] In view of the current developments in the elections, what will the composition of the Majles be, in your opinion? Is there a clear forecast on this?

[Karrubi] I said that I feel strongly that if there is no shortsightedness, the composition of the fifth Majles will be a balanced one in which a wide range of views will be reflected. This is what a balance among political forces and people with various views in society means. My forecast is that four groups will participate actively in the Majles. The first group will be the Militant Clergy and the Islamic Coalition and groups that support their ideas, which is a considerable number of deputies.

The second group will be the newly-formed group of the system's officials, who also have a considerable number of supporters and form a strong front. I think that this group will rank second in the votes. I am also counting those who have ideas that are close to these gentlemen's ideas as a part of this group.

The third group is the more serious or "radical" left who will rank third. There will also be a fourth group of independent deputies who will not be affiliated in any way with the other three groups. And as far as I know, this fourth group has a better chance of winning in the towns. Of course I say if... [ellipsis and sentence as published]

[Reporter] You have spoken of an "independence of votes." How true is this in the Majles and to what extent has it been manifested?

[Karrubi] First of all let us not forget that it is the "independent vote" of the deputies that gives the Majles independence and power. Many elements affect the votes of the deputies. A deputy may not be an expert on an issue. Naturally, in this case, he will ask someone whom he trusts about this. It is not wrong for a deputy to ask for the qualified views of another deputy. Of course, this is in the form of consultation. But the final vote is up to the deputy himself.

What is dangerous is factional efforts to approve or reject qualified views and the idea that if one group adopts a decision everyone should approve it, even if the interests of the country and the nation are different. It is here that the Majles deputies' independent vote and independent action are harmed and, in turn, this harms everyone.

In short, if they take the interests of the system, of the country, and of the deprived masses into consideration, they will display independent voting. [passage omitted]

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[Reporter] You have said that the fifth Majles will be a balanced one.

[Karrubi] Yes. Of course not very decisively, but relatively.

[Reporter] How can this balance be created? In other words, in your opinion don't the people choose from one list and one faction and flock toward one group in order to choose the best?

[Karrubi] I think that the problem of the elections does not come from the people. The people think completely differently from one another. In other words, all the people do not think the same way. Therefore, they will not vote the same way. [passage omitted]

I said that the problem of the elections does not come from the people. The problem emerges when a group wants to portray itself as the guardian of the people and to act as their guardians. This attitude should be removed. The fact that one faction thinks it can simply dictate a "line" to the people and sometimes even starts propaganda attacks is what spoils everything and upsets the election atmosphere. [passage omitted]

[Reporter] In your opinion, how important a factor is the number of participants in the elections?

[Karrubi] The more people go to the polls, the more deputies with popular backing will be voted into the Majles. [passage omitted]

[Reporter] In view of your explanations and arguments and the fact that the Majles elections are one of the most major domains for forming the country's present and future, is failure to vote correct?

[Karrubi] Logically and definitely no. This is a necessity and each person should play his role to safeguard the power of Islam and of the Islamic system. We are addressing those who are committed to the Imam, the revolution, and the blood of the martyrs and who think about the country's strength and power in confronting the foreigners. Such people will never doubt the need to go to the polls because they know that they are being watched by the pure souls of the Imam and the martyrs. They will not waste their votes in order to safeguard a revolution for which they have made so many sacrifices.

[Reporter] Some may ask whom they should vote for.

[Karrubi] I am sure there will be good people on all the lists and that people with various views will, God willing, be screened. Naturally anyone can choose a good person from among the candidates. [passage omitted]

[Reporter] Thank you for having given our readers this opportunity.

[Karrubi] I also thank you for your patience.

Iran: Mohammadi-Reyshahri Interviewed on Elections

NC1802175896 Tehran HAMSHAHRI in Persian 8 Feb 96 p 2

["Text" of an interview with Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Mohammadi-Reyshahri by an unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] We are approaching the elections. Taking into account all the conditions in the country, how do you assess the priorities that will be given to activities and programs in the next four years? In this context, what do you think are the most important characteristics that the deputies of the fifth term should have?

[Mohammadi-Reyshahri] I think that the Majles' priorities will be determined by the people's needs, problems, and demands. If the deputies of the fifth term want to know what the priorities are, they should take the people's problems into consideration and see what the people want. If we answer this question on the eve of the 18th year since the victory of the revolution, we should say that the revolution tells us that the people give priority to the revolution's values—values for which they have shed blood and suffered a war and many pressures. Social justice is at the top of the list. The people have tolerated all the pressures, as we have seen, so that they can preserve these values and see them grow. Even the dear ones whom they have sacrificed have been for lost the sake of these values. But the people do not tolerate injustice, bribery, corruption, and so on.

Therefore, a Majles with strong deputies who are committed to the revolution's values and who use their own instruments—that is, the selection of ministers and officials—can safeguard values. If by expedience we mean what is good for the revolution and not personal expedience, then the best people will be elected and will be able to ensure these values.

Frankly speaking, the services rendered by the government since the revolution have been laudable. On the whole, they have worked toward the revolution's objectives. Of course we still have a long way to go in order to achieve our objectives. Much work has been done and our objectives are lofty.

The Majles should try to find the best officials. And if someone cannot ensure these objectives, he should be replaced with someone who can.

Eliminating poverty, too, is among the Majles' priorities. Much has been done in this direction, but we have

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not reached a favorable point. Inflation is continuing and the workers' situation is unfavorable. The Majles' programs should decrease the pressure on them. This can be done with strong programs and management, which, in turn, will help us solve 60-70 percent of the problems. In addition to all this, social welfare is needed. The philosophy behind the mission of the Prophet and Islam is the simultaneous achievement of both material and moral progress. They complement each other to form "Islam." Materialism and spirituality are "Islam" within the framework of the Islamic outlook. If we are unable to meet the people's material needs, we cannot convey our spiritual messages to society.

[Correspondent] An opinion that has been heard during the past few months is that "a favorable Majles is one that has common views" and those who support this opinion naturally favor the formation of the fifth term with the fewest differences in stands and opinions. What is your opinion on this?

[Mohammadi-Reyshahri] This opinion can be viewed from various angles. If all the deputies work within one framework and toward one goal—that is, the system, the supreme jurisconsult, and the leadership—this is good. But it is both impossible and bad for everyone to think in the same way. Just as God has created different types of people, there are also different ways of thinking. If we mean that the Majles should be in the hands of one process, then this is something that should be discussed. Naturally if a conflict of views is within the framework of Islamic ethics, it can bring realities to light much better. This is the meaning of council. Council means deliberation leading to a general summing up, which can be achieved in two ways:

1. We can either have various preferences and processes working toward one objective in the Majles, which present their views to be voted on; or

2. We can have one single process in the Majles, but a process that is open to ideas. That is, a process that can tolerate various views and opinions. A good Majles is one that allows a deputy from a specific process to express his views, which may be contrary to the process. [passage omitted]

If a political process wants to rule the Majles, it should be able to tolerate various views and not put labels on opponents. And as the esteemed leader has clarified in his recent remarks, people cannot be baselessly accused of being against the supreme jurisconsult. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] In general, how do you assess the American pressures on Iran and, namely, its recent decision to allocate $20 million? What are the various aspects of this policy of containment or pressure and what are its objectives?

[Mohammadi-Reyshahri] The only country in the world today that is standing up to America in the full sense of the word, is the Islamic Republic of Iran; and the only country that the world's liberation movements can lean on is Islamic Iran. America knows that if it does not "contain" the Islamic Revolution, the revolution will spread and engulf the entire region and the world. Therefore, America is doing its best to force the Islamic Revolution to surrender.

The $20 million have been allocated out of helplessness and it is a disgraceful way of showing America's readiness to crush us. It is extremely disgraceful for America to overtly allocate funds for subversion in Iran. However, as long as the Iranians maintain their revolutionary nature, these pressures will exist.

If anyone thinks that if we have nothing to do with America, it will leave us alone, they are mistaken. Each step that we retreat means that America advances several steps. If it has not done anything until now, it has been because of our resistance, our cultural onslaught against it, and our people's support for the revolution. They will not be satisfied with anything less than the annihilation of Iran and its independence.

Fortunately all this shows that despite the rumors in the foreign press, our system is walking within the genuine lines of the Imam. And these pressures are precisely because of this. These pressures will be reduced only when we lose our characteristics or when America loses its arrogant nature. I hope that with the resistance of the people and the leadership of the esteemed leader, we will turn our revolution into the world revolution of the Mahdi.

[Correspondent] There has been talk recently about the formation of parties and about the impact this will have on the country's affairs. What is your opinion on this? Within the framework of this discussion, we would like your opinion on the participation of a number of officials in the elections.

[Mohammadi-Reyshahri] We should divide this issue into three sections:

1. The first statement [by the officials];

2. The ministers' participation;

3. The principle of the movement.

The first statement could have been formulated in such a way as to avoid being misunderstood by the Majles and the government. But fortunately, thanks to the directives of the esteemed leader, this issue was resolved. It is

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not in the government's interest for its ministers to participate in the elections. As for the principle of the movement, I approve of all groups that move in the line of Islam, the revolution, the Imam, the leadership, and the supreme jurisconsult, and are within the framework of the system. Any group that is working toward the system's objectives is approved.

As for the formation of this process, I believe that if the officials' main objective in view of the current sensitive conditions is to fulfill the values of the revolution and the aspirations of His Eminence the Imam and the esteemed leader, this movement can definitely help the people to choose the best. Basically speaking, the existence of a number of lists helps the people to examine things much better and give them a wider choice. Undoubtedly the Majles is the outcome of the nation's votes—a nation that examines issues and that, according to the esteemed leader, votes for its candidates with open eyes. The elections are held so that the best can be chosen, and this can be done only if the people are given the opportunity to choose the best. The existence of a number of lists envisages the examination of issues in two phases. One phase is carried out by the groups that prepare the lists, and the second phase is carried out by the people. Therefore, the existence of a number of lists within the framework of the law is a positive step aimed at increasing the strength of the Majles.

Iran: Qom Friday Prayers Sermon on Majles Elections

LD1702232396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 2056 GMT 17 Feb 96

[Second Friday prayers sermon by Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini-Najafbadi, deputy speaker of the Iranian Assembly of Experts, in Qom on 16 February — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Even more important than participating in the elections is the care in voting. Not everyone who might get enough votes for Majles will be worthy of it. There might be deputies entering Majles who will be defending Islam and there might be those who are careless about Islam. There might be deputies entering the Majles who will be careless about the rights of the deprived or there might be deputies who are concerned about them. It is best if you chose the most pious and suitable people for the Islamic order. One should not vote out of fancy. One should be careful about who one votes for. Who are you going to trust with your deposit? Who are you going to trust with the imam's [Khomeyni's] deposit? Who are you going to put in charge of the order? They are going to be in charge for four years. We would have to accept whatever they decide. You have to be very careful with your votes. If you know that someone is unsuitable, it might even be a sin if you vote for him. Only the most suitable people have to be elected.

I will point to three features in the order so that we might know what type of deputies we might need. Our order has three features. First, it is Islamic. What does this mean? It means that we have all voted for the management of the country according to Islamic laws and regulations. When we voted for the Islamic Republic, it meant that we wanted to implement the laws of Islam and the Koran. This is the Islamic feature. If we are not bound to Islamic laws, we would be like any other government.

Second, the order is ruled by the supreme jurisconsult. This means that we believe a person, whom we believe is the successor to the hidden imam and the prophet, is at the top of the order. Third, our country is going through a period of reconstruction. It means that development and progress had been neglected for many years and we want to develop the country. We want to solve the consequences of the imposed war. We want to have a developed and independent country.

Taking into account these three features, I can point to two types of deputies that we need. On the one hand, there are those who are specialists. In other words, they should be specialists in matters of development, politics, society, economics, and other things. The reconstruction of the country is not a simple matter. It needs specialists. We need specialists. But not every sort of specialist. We need the sort of specialist that accepts the rule of the supreme jurisconsult. This acceptance should not be limited to slogans, it must be practical. He must be obedient to the leader. He must accept the word of the leader as the word of God. He must be obedient. He must not question. Otherwise it will no do. We want a specialist who is going to use his expertise for the implementation of Islam. [crowd chants: "God is great"] We don't want a specialist of high status who has nothing to do with the rule of the supreme jurisconsult.

Furthermore, we want those specialists who believe in Islamic laws. Those who believe that Islamic laws can solve problems. Those who believe that Islamic laws can solve various social problems and build a worthy society. If they accept this fact, they will use their expertise in the proper path. But if they do not believe this fact, we might succeed in the various dimensions of social development and construction, but we don't want any sort of construction, we want construction based on Islamic regulations. This is the type of construction that we need. We need specialists very much, but the sort of specialist who believes in Islam and who will look to Islam when he is writing the law.

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Another sort of deputy that we need is the Islamic scholar and jurisconsult who understands Islamic values. These deputies would need to pass Islamic laws in the Majles, therefore they need to know Islam. They need to know Islamic laws. They would fail if they did not know Islamic laws. We really need these clerics. They are the ones who understand Islam. They know about Islamic laws. They understand matters related to the jurisconsult. We surely need the clergy. But not every sort of clergy, only the ones who believe in Islamic laws and regulations. The sort of clergy that is going to ask if the bills in the Majles are according to Islamic laws — and who is going to follow them up in detail in the parliamentary committees and on the Majles floor. The sort that is going to speak of Islam. Of course, the Guardian Council is there to supervise. But this is not enough. The deputies must be concerned. Their bills and private bills and their votes must be according to Islam. This is what we need. We really need the clergy. Leaving the clergy aside with the excuse of needing experts is a treachery against the revolution. [crowd chants approval] We want specialists. We do not deny this. But we also want the clergy.

Brothers and sisters! Bring to mind the events of the constitutional revolution. At the time of the constitutional revolution there were many clerics in the Majles. But there were fewer in the second Majles and even fewer in the third Majles. Their numbers gradually declined. Those events should not be repeated. You should be careful. There is a need for competent clerics. You will take these facts into account, God willing. [passage omitted]

Iran: Officials Say Elections Based on 'Lofty Objectives'

NC1802143896 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 31 Jan 96 p 2

["Text" of the second statement by officials on the elections]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Recently we have witnessed the "political zeal" and the "religious enthusiasm" of people who are preparing to enter the biggest "political event of the day" in order to steadfastly determine the fate of their Islamic homeland and, by participating in the elections, to respond to the ever-contemporary call of the late Imam, may his soul be sanctified, and of the esteemed leader Ayatollah Khamene'i, may his shadow be lengthened. [passage omitted]

In our message, we "the officials willing to serve toward the country's reconstruction" are neither vying for rank nor seeking to reject what is just. Nor are we trying to dominate the scene or pressure anyone or any group. What we intend to do is perform our duties with the great responsibility that the people of this country have placed upon our shoulders and to respond positively to the great leader who, with his divine insight, has called on everyone for "an active presence" in the elections.

We express our respect for all candidates and hold dear all groups that are acting according to their Islamic and national duties, that are keeping the elections full of enthusiasm and sincerity, and are putting forth to the nation the names of worthy people as candidates for the Majles elections. We believe that all groups involved in the elections should act according to the lofty objectives of Islam and the Islamic Revolution and on the basis of the lofty thoughts and sympathizing messages of the esteemed leader of the revolution. This way, all voters can gain profound political knowledge in order to elect the most competent figures to undertake the duties of the country's legislative branch.

We believe that at this sensitive juncture in history, only pious and competent people who believe wholeheartedly in Islam as the sole "school of thought for guidance and growth" and who believe that this divine belief alters the lives of people and society toward the "better" and makes Islamic society stand out above all other societies can play an effective and victorious role in confronting the plots of a many-faced America against Islam, spirituality, and knowledge. With zeal, faith, and effort, the country's reconstruction can continue with the help of national unity, understanding, and competent forces that are devoted to the supreme jurisconsult. This is how we can achieve the new Islamic civilization. This path has been charted thanks to the brave efforts of "the great leader of the country's reconstruction" Ayatollah [as published] Hashemi-Rafsanjani and the services of devoted officials in all fields. Again, it is in this way that the fulfillment of the slogans of "the grandeur of Islam," "the continuation of reconstruction," and "the flourishment of Iran" can be achieved.

We, "the officials serving the nation," state that, after studying the situation with the guidance of the esteemed leader, the ministers who have signed the statement will not publish a list of candidates. With the permission of His Eminence, candidates of the "officials serving the country's reconstruction" will be introduced on the basis of approval by the vice presidents and other officials who do not hold ministerial responsibilities.

Naturally, all signatories will continue to be present on the zealous scene of the elections and will encourage and mobilize each and every member of the nation throughout the Islamic homeland to participate in the elections.

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It is within the dignity of the great and martyr-nurturing nation of Islamic Iran to hold the Majles elections as spectacularly as possible. The healthiness and dignity of the elections depends on the greatest solidarity possible, as well as on peaceful behavior and healthy competition among all groups that believe in Islam, the revolution, and the supreme jurisconsult. The elections can only be healthy and dignified if the political code of the elections is observed by the candidates and their supporters.

It is in this way that we hope and expect the Fifth Majles to powerfully continue on the path that has been charted by the past four terms and which is the outcome of the blood shed by thousands of martyrs. We also expect the Fifth Majles to safeguard Islamic justice. [passage omitted]

[Signed] Esma'il Shushtari

Isa Kalantari

Reza Amrollahi

'Ata'ollah Mohajerani

Akbar Torkan

Mohammad Hashemi

Mohsen Nurbakhsh

Mohammad 'Ali Najafi

Gholamhoseyn Karbaschian

Mostafa Hashemi-Taba

Bizhan Zanganeh

Mohammad Reza Ne'matzadeh

Gholamreza Foruzesh

Mohammad Gharazi

Gholamreza Shafe'i

Morteza Mohammadkhan

Iran: Militant Clergy Statement on Majles, Marches

NC1802162396 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 8 Feb 96 pp 1, 2

["Text" of a statement issued by the Tehran Militant Clergy marking the 17th anniversary of the Islamic revolution and the upcoming Majles elections; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] While extending its congratulations on the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic revolution and on the eve of the elections for the fifth term of the Majles, the Tehran Militant Clergy [TMC] has a few points that it would like to discuss with the alert and vigilant people in Islamic Iran.

The Leadership and the People

The Islamic revolution has two basic pillars—the "leader" and the "people." Due to its strong theoretical basis on the issue of leadership, our revolution will never face weakness.

The leader of this revolution relies on divine support, and as long as this divine link, this Koranic commitment, and the pacts based on revelation exist, there will be no place for infiltration by foreign enemies. Our system's political independence, acting as an awe-inspiring value, has attracted the praise of the nations of the world on the one hand, and the hatred and spite of world arrogance on the other. [passage omitted]

The second basic pillar of our Islamic revolution is the people, who, with their constant presence, have guarded our movement from various plots by the enemies. [passage omitted]

While thanking the heroic people for their presence and for their vigilance and alertness, the TMC prays to Almighty God that this luminosity and spirituality will continue.

Global and American Plots

Despite the view that says no foreign onslaught or danger threatens our system because today Islamic Iran is the main source of Islamic and Koranic liberation movements, it is still the target of world arrogance's spite. We should never forget this reality. Our system today, like in the past, is exposed to various satanic plots that are being hatched by the CIA, the Pentagon, and the White House—all of whom seize each and every opportunity to inflict a blow to our system. They even have no qualms about overtly allocating a budget to overthrow our system and to bare their claws and teeth at the brave Iranian nation. Undoubtedly these threats exist because the messages of the Islamic revolution, as the major element in the awakening and liberation of nations, have been spread throughout the world and are becoming clearer and clearer each day.

The Majles approval of a budget to uncover plots and to thwart America's sinister plans is a suitable and laudable step which shows the grandeur and braveness of our nation.

Social Justice and Development

Currently, the issue of social justice and development are the most important issues and have always been on the minds of our Islamic society. Our country has

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been moving toward reconstruction and development for a few years now and it will continue decisively and persistently on this path. Clearly no one doubts the extreme significance of the reconstruction of the Islamic country. But as repeatedly stated by the esteemed leader, our revolution was made in order to establish social justice. Social justice is the objective of development and development is the prologue to social justice. True development and progress without the fulfillment of social justice is only a mirage.

Social justice can be achieved only when all types of discrimination are eliminated, when poverty is completely uprooted, when the people participate in all the economic sectors, and when they seriously participate in the country's reconstruction and production. In order to achieve this significant goal, the country's executive officials should implement policies that will make good use of national wealth so that economic discipline can be established on the basis of the luminous directives of the esteemed leader.

The Majles' supervisory role in establishing economic and monetary discipline is a determining factor and, thank God, the Majles' fourth term succeeded in this. It is hoped that the Majles' fifth term will continue this task.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the manifestation of our people's unflinching determination to reconstruct the country and solve problems and difficulties. Fortunately, during the past few years the government and the Majles have exerted fraternal efforts and have displayed their uniformity and unanimity in dealing with the problems of the oppressed and in meeting the people's true needs.

Now, a bright figure from the TMC is at the head of the Islamic government. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Hashemi-Rafsanjani has always been the leader and supporter of the oppressed and has been one of the favorite figures of the ummah, of the Imam, and of the leader.

He undertook the management of the country's reconstruction after the demise of the Imam of the ummah and after the conclusion of the imposed war with laudable efforts. And today our people are witnessing how the country has flourished and developed and they feel the impact of these changes greatly. The continuation of the government's participation and strength is contingent on the people's alert support, on the officials' vigilance, and on the careful supervision by the Majles and the supervisory organs.

On the issue of development, the government should heed the situation of the oppressed and the deprived and put forward a plan for the country's development and reconstruction that is based on Islamic teachings.

The Islamic development plan should be designed with the help of all experts and researchers and all Islamic, political, and economic experts in a bid to achieve development coupled with social justice.

The Fifth Term Majles Elections

Our divine system will face yet another Islamic and national test. Elections in our system are actually a pledge of allegiance to the revolution's aspirations and values and prove the popularity of our system to the world.

With the help of God, we will pass the fifth divine test in the elections for the fifth legislative term. Political participation in the elections is a canonical duty that we should not doubt in the least.

The Islamic Republic's legislative branch is the place for those who believe in pure Mohammedan Islam and in the principles that form the basis of the Islamic revolution. The holy Majles is the place for those who safeguard Islam and the achievements of the Islamic Republic, especially the Constitution, and a place where its deputies will not spare any effort toward these objectives.

By understanding the Majles' lofty position, the deputies should safeguard the people's legitimate freedoms and be the nation's constantly vigilant eye watching how the country is managed by the executive officials and how the various laws and regulations for managing the country are approved.

The elections for the Majles fifth term should be a manifestation of the people's alert participation in determining their fate, an example of the rule of morality and spirituality in our society, and a clear example of our national power and the Islamic Republic's stability.

We want a Majles that will manifest national strength and pride. We want a Majles that will alertly thwart the ploys by the world powers and will not fear the empty threats by world arrogance, especially America.

The Majles should be a symbol of our people's braveness and an institution that should not be weakened when facing disagreeable issues. The Majles should be subject to the supreme jurisconsult and do its best to fulfill the Islamic revolution's values and aspirations.

God willing, the Majles fifth term, like the past term, will be an efficient term and will help the government to continue on the path of reconstruction.

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If all the groups and individuals respect the votes of the people, a Majles that is appropriate for the Islamic Republic and that follows the supreme jurisconsult will certainly be elected.

The 22 Bahman [11 February] March

The anniversary of the victory of the revolution is the anniversary of the day when the 2,500 years of despotism was overthrown. [passage omitted]

The TMC calls on the heroic Iranian nation to renew its allegiance to the blood shed by the martyrs and to the esteemed leader of the Islamic revolution, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i. The TMC calls on it to take to the streets with its enemy-breaking slogans of God is Great and Death to America, once again displaying its determination to continue the path of the Imam and of Islamic values.

[Signed] The Tehran Militant Clergy Association.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto Accuses Opposition of Playing 'Agitation Politics'

BK2002043296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said her government is determined to deal effectively with terrorism and the Kalashnikov culture in the country and that those promoting agitation politics will not succeed. She was speaking at a public meeting in Badin yesterday. The prime minister made it clear that Sindh will remain united, and no one will be allowed to harm the integrity of the country. She said the time has gone when members of National Assembly and provincial assemblies are abducted. She said the government will provide everyone with protection of life and property. She accused the opposition and their associates of harming the economy of the country and looting national exchequer. She said as soon as she came into power, she undertook long-term plans to provide education and other basic amenities to the people of the country with no discrimination. She said her government is fulfilling its commitments to provide jobs to the jobless and land to the landless farmers. Big development projects have been undertaken by the Pakistan People's Party government and protection of the constitution has been ensured.

The prime minister asked the opposition what steps they had taken during their tenure except to adopt the policy of promoting one group of individuals over the other. The prime minister said her party is a national party and is represented in all the four provinces of the country; that its politics are based on its love of people. She said the opposition serves only a particular lobby as a regional party.

Pakistan: Leghari Rules Out Signing CTBT 'Unilaterally'

BK2102143996 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said the consensus on important national issues should be perceivable among the public. Talking to journalists at the Aiwan-i-Sadr [President's House] today, he said there existed consensus on Kashmir, peaceful nuclear program, and economic policies among all major political groups, but this is not being reflected in and outside parliament. He expressed the hope that soon political groups ending polarization will sit together to ponder over the issues confronting the nation.

Responding to a question about nuclear energy, the president asserted that our nuclear program is purely a peaceful one and Pakistan would not sign a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT] unilaterally. He assured that national interests would not be compromised.

Answering a question on Kashmir, the president said India, by augmentation of security forces in the occupied valley, would not be able to achieve its motive as the alienation between occupying forces in Kashmiris is absolute.

To yet another question on Afghanistan, the president said Pakistan wants early solution of the Afghan problem so that a large number of refugees could return to their homeland with honor and dignity.

Pakistan: Leghari Welcomes Sharif's Statement on Nuclear Issue

BK2102121396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has called upon the politicians to widen national consensus on major issues. Talking to newsmen in Islamabad this morning, the president pointed out that there is already a national consensus on Pakistan's security, its peaceful nuclear program, Kashmir, and economic liberalization. He said time has come for politicians now to show this consensus to the world, which, though prevailing, is not visible in and outside parliament. He stressed that they have been working for this purpose.

In this regard, he also welcomed the statement of the leader of the opposition, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, in Washington on Pakistan's peaceful nuclear program.

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He declared that the vital interests, including nuclear program, would not be compromised. He repeated that a solution of nuclear issue in South Asia is to be found on the basis of regional and multinational approach.

Earlier, a stream of visitors called on the president at Aiwan-i-Sadr [President's House] to exchange 'Id [Muslim religious festival] greetings. They included politicians, service chiefs, diplomats, retired and serving civil and military officials, and members of the general public. The president also received applications from the public concerning their problems and passed orders for their early redressal.

Pakistan: Foreign Minister Describes U.S. Talks on Afghanistan

BK1902031596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali says Pakistan has called upon the United States to play a much more meaningful and effective role in the UN efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan. Speaking to reporters in Islamabad yesterday, he said that during his recent visit to Washington both countries agreed that a solution to the problem should come from the Afghan people themselves. The two countries agreed on the main elements of the policies that all countries should adopt toward Afghanistan. These include noninterference in Afghanistan's internal affairs, neutrality toward all Afghan leaders, the unity of Afghanistan, and the establishment of a broad-based representative government there.

He also held an extensive meeting with UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali, during which he discussed the situation in Afghanistan.

Pakistan: Foreign Office Denies Report of Tripartite Talks in Tehran

BK2102100096 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 21 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Tariq Butt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Denying reports about any tripartite talks between Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan in Tehran during Foreign Secretary Najamuddin Shaikh's recent visit, the Foreign Office has termed them as unwarranted and speculative."

"Pakistan has not broken off relations with the Kabul regime, and Kabul is well aware that they could communicate through their embassy in Islamabad," a Foreign Office spokesman said here Tuesday.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi had said in Tehran on Monday that such talks, though indirect, did indeed take place with Kabul being represented by Afghan Minister of State in the Foreign Office Najibollah Lafra'i.

At the time of announcing Najamuddin Sahikh's two-day visit to Tehran as part of the continuing bilateral consultations four days ago, the Foreign Office spokesman had categorically stated that there was no question of a meeting between the Foreign Secretary and any representative of the Kabul regime in Iran.

Iranian officials had said in Tehran on Monday on the conclusion of Shaikh's visit that there had been an outstanding development in relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Answering a question, the Foreign Office spokesman said Tuesday that the question of having proximity or tripartite talks does not arise. He said that in keeping with the on-going practice, the Iranian and Pakistani sides had exchanged information on the discussions each side had had with various Afghan leaders and factions.

To another question, the spokesman said the Foreign Secretary had in depth discussions with Iranian officials during his visit to Tehran.

The talks in which both the sides reviewed bilateral relations as well as the situation developing in Afghanistan were very fruitful.

The discussion on Afghanistan centered on the best way Iran and Pakistan can help the Afghan leaders in evolving a solution for the Afghan imbroglio envisaging the transfer of power and setting up of a broad based government in Afghanistan, the spokesman said.

He said the joint communique issued at the end of the talks gives an accurate picture of the discussions.

The mere fact that Tehran has claimed that indirect dialogue were held between Pakistan and the Kabul regime and Islamabad denied it gives a clear idea about the differences between Pakistan and Iran on the Afghan situation.

Moreover, Islamabad is not ready to give legitimacy to the Kabul regime, but Broujerdi had said that Iran considered the Rabbani government "the only legal authority in Afghanistan, echoing similar views of other Iranian officials.

However, it is a fact that before Shaikh flew to Tehran on Feb. 17, Lafra'i had reached there. And it was there he expressed the desire for good relations with Islamabad.

Despite Pakistan's strong opposition to the Kabul regime, Iran has chosen not to side with the former

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and has extended maximum support to the latter at this critical time.

Pakistan: Police Question 'Arab National' Detained Near U.S. Embassy

BK2102071796 Islamabad THE NATION in English 21 Feb 96 p 9

[Report by THE NATION correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — An armed Arab national was nabbed near U.S. Embassy. A thorough investigation has been initiated.

According to details, an Arab national was seen hovering around American Embassy on Tuesday [20 February]. The information was transmitted to Secretariat Police Station by the security staff of the Embassy. The suspect was rounded up the police party and taken into custody. [sentence as published]

During interrogation by the police the arrested man revealed that he was a Kurd known as Usman Ali Sharif.

Even a guard has been posted on the roof of the lock up, said the police officials. Sub-Inspector Police Khalid Rashid is interrogating the man. Police apprehended that the young man might have some dangerous mission in mind.

Pakistan: Altaf, Nawaz Meet To Review Political Situation

BK2102093596 Karachi DAWN in English 20 Feb 96 p 16

[Report by Athar Ali]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] LONDON, Feb 19: The opposition leader, Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, had a 90-minute meeting on Monday with the Muhajir Qaumi Movement leader [MQM], leader, Mr Altaf Hussain, at which they reviewed the current political situation in the country with special reference to Karachi.

Mr Nawaz Sharif, who went to attend a seminar in Washington on nuclear non-proliferation, has stayed over in London to celebrate 'Id with his family.

His father, Mian Mohammad Sharif, and other members of his family are already here. The elder Mian Sharif is recuperating after receiving treatment for his heart condition.

At the meeting with Mr Hussain, Nawaz Sharif was informed about the latest situation with regard to the Rangers operation in Karachi, and the arrests of MQM workers. Mr Hussain also told him about the deportation from Saudi Arabia of three MQM workers who were later detained in Islamabad.

One of them was made to appear on television to make his statement against the MQM which, according to the party leader, was extracted under duress.

Mian Nawaz Sharif is said to have assured Mr Hussain that the Muslim League and other like-minded organizations were taking note of the atrocities being committed against the Muhajirs and will soon decide their strategy. The Muslim League leader said that the government, by indulging in these human rights abuses, was punishing those who were part of the struggle for the establishment of Pakistan. He expressed his grief at the killings and said that the strategy his party will decide in future against the government will not remain confined to statements. It will be before the public for their approval.

Mr Hussain said that "our party demands only that which is set out in the Pakistan constitution". Since the creation of Pakistan, he added, Muhajirs have been victimised, kept out of jobs and universities.

"Even our famous sons, like the cricketer Javed Miandad, are treated like dirt". But, he pointed, that he will not allow his people to be treated in this way. Such treatment could lead to Muhajir calls for a separate province, he said.

He accused Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of being "obsessed by racist and feudal thinking. She treats all Pakistanis as her peasants and serfs. But I will not allow my people to be treated in this way", he said.

Mr Hussain has in a statement today condemned the government for the killing of another party worker from Korangi.

Meanwhile, in an interview wit the Times newspaper of Monday morning, he has accused the government of trying to eliminate him physically, after having failed to do so politically. He is afraid he could become the Ken Saro-Wiwa of Pakistan if he was sent back. This was a reference to the Nigerian human rights activists who with eight others was executed in November despite worldwide protests made to Nigeria's military rulers.

The MQM leader, who has been living in self-imposed exiles for several years, told The Times that he was desperate to return to Karachi.

"But there have been, so many attempts on my life that my people will not allow me to go back", he added. He said he was hopeful that the British government, despite requests from the Pakistan authorities to deport him, will not do so, as had been done in the case of Saudi dissident, Mohammad al-Mas'ari. Mr al-Mas'ari is now fighting a legal battle against his deportation.

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"All my activities are in accordance with the British law", Mr Hussain is reported to have told The Times.

In another report published from Karachi in the same issue, The Times expressed fears that MQM activities will disrupt the England Pakistan World Cup match to be held in Karachi on March 3, with a protest and a strike.

Pakistan: Missiles, Rockets Seized From Afghan Refugee Camp

BK1802095996 Karachi DAWN in English 17 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by Staff Correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Quetta, Feb 16 — Local administration on Thursday evening [15 February] seized huge quantity of arms and ammunition from the hilly area of Dalbandeen near Pak-Afghan border in Chagai district, some 450 km south west of provincial capital, official sources said.

According to sources, Dalbandeen Assistant Commissioner Saeed Jamali on a tip-off raided the hilly area near Girdi Jangal, a big Afghan refugee camp in District Chagai.

During search huge quantity of ammunition, including six missiles, 1,400 anti-tank rockets, and shells and weapons were recovered from smugglers' hideout. "The huge consignment which was bought in from Afghanistan was destined for Karachi and other parts of the country," Mr. Jamali told DAWN when contacted in Dalbandeen by telephone.

He said that the seized missiles and rockets were packed in boxes. No arrests have been made in this connection as the smugglers escaped from the camp before raid.

Pakistan: Commentary Views Progress of Afghan Opposition Talks

BK1802140696 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 18 Feb 96 p 6

[Commentary by Khalid Akhtar: "Veiled Messages From Afghans' Islamabad Gathering"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] What the Afghan opposition talks in Islamabad have achieved? Not much. But they have not been all that barren or fruitless either.

For over a week Islamabad remained focus of attention as the Afghan opposition leaders were seen closeted, exchanging views, meeting Pakistani leaders and now and then coming out with what they think about the Afghan situation.

Gen Rasheed Dostum who probably holds the balance in Afghanistan, as his switching to the Rabbani camp or throwing his lot with the Taleban could provide a decisive edge to either side, remained in the limelight throughout his stay in the capital. The TV camera and newsmen followed him, and the Uzbek leader was obliging all the time. The message was clear and that was: "Here was a leader who would matter in the new set-up."

Golboddin Hekmatyar who has frequented this land too often and enjoys a soft corner in some quarters here, looked somber and thoughtful and was seen in low key in the initial stages of consultations. The most positive and happy thing was that none of Afghan leaders echoed war rhetorics and instead talked of the urgency to restore peace in the war-ravaged Afghanistan.

Golboddin Hekmatyar and Gen Dostum had been the bitterest enemies of each other at one time. But in politics there are no permanent enemies and no permanent friends. And this is more true in case of Afghanistan where alliances are made and unmade too quickly and that too more due to the compulsions of gun-rattling diplomacy than long-term political objectives.

However, in Islamabad they acted like the best of allies. What was said by one was supported by the other. Hekmatyar called upon Pakistan to arrange intra-Afghan talks on its soil for solution of the conflict. Gen Dostum readily backed Hekmatyar on this. It was evident that the two leaders are looking to Pakistan for a major role in efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan.

The level of foreign intervention in Afghanistan, as pointed out by these Afghan leaders, has been shocking indeed. While Hekmatyar was bitter about intervention by Russia and India, Dostum's disclosure that Ukraine had supplied 30 warplanes to Commander Ahmad Shah Masud gave a jolt to all. A recent report that the bankrupt Russia has started giving 25 million dollars aid to Rabbani government every month is a loud manifestation of the revival of Moscow's strategic interest in Afghanistan. All this should be a bitter reminder to the warring Afghan factions as well as to Pakistan and Iran, the two countries which have the highest stake in Afghanistan, that as the Afghan conflict prolongs foreign intervention will assume wider dimensions. This could confront both Pakistan and Iran with a very serious situation.

Significantly the Afghan opposition leaders' talks in Islamabad almost coincided with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Broujerdi's visit. After his talks in Islamabad Mr Broujerdi while sharply criticising the Taleban, accusing if of involvement in the drug business, reiterated

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that Pakistan and Iran continued to have varying perception over the student militia phenomenon. This was the harshest Iranian criticism of the Taleban to date dashing all hopes that the two could sort out their differences in the foreseeable future.

Iran's strategy for the time being is aimed at, (No 1) helping Rabbani regime to maintain its hold over Kabul and, (No 2) simultaneously bring about a reconciliation between the Rabbani government and Islamabad and thus pave way for a new but acceptable set-up in Kabul. There are indications that Iran has made some headway in achieving this objective.

Mr Broujerdi announced in Tehran last Wednesday that Islamabad and Kabul are to hold talks in the Iranian capital on Saturday with Iran playing a mediatory role. Needless to say Iran would not have staged these talks without ensuring that enough spadework had been done to break the stalemate between Kabul and Islamabad. Iran, too, still find it difficult to continue to hold on to its incomprehensible position of supporting the illegitimate regime of Rabbani indefinitely. This explains Iran's tremendous efforts to break deadlock at the Afghan scene.

One of the messages of the Afghan leaders' talks in Islamabad has been that of moderation. The Afghan leaders after the talks while reiterating the demands for the installation of a broad-based government and warning Kabul that an attack on any faction will be considered an attack on the Alliance as a whole, at the same time offered talks to Rabbani to find a way out of the deepening quagmire. This is a major shift in the Afghan opposition position and appears largely due to the efforts of Iran. Hitherto the Afghan opposition had rejected talks with Rabbani, maintaining that there was nothing to discuss and that Rabbani must quit unconditionally.

It is true that the Taleban who have emerged as the strongest and biggest player on the Afghan scene and who control more than half of Afghanistan, are not a party to the talks offer and this renders the initiative somewhat weak. But the very fact that this offer has been made from the soil of Pakistan makes the initiative meaningful and gives it the necessary weight. Mind you, the accord for the installation of Rabbani regime as well as that of the previous government of Mujaddedi were hammered out on the soil of Pakistan.

At first Kabul dismissed the Islamabad talks as insignificant adding that such an exercise could only be useful and meaningful if they are held in Afghanistan. However, VOA [Voice of America] later quoted Mr. Rabbani as saying that he was ready to go to the headquarters of the opposition groups for talks to find a solution to the conflict. Admittedly Rabbani had been adopting delaying tactics to prolong his rule and the ploy of talks has been one such tactics. Still his response to the opposition offer could not but be termed as positive in the existing circumstances.

Contrary to the general view that the Islamabad talks have been far from significant, the fact is that these dialogues have been multi-dimensional. In the first place, as already pointed out, they could lead to the desperately needed resumption of dialogue between the opposition and the Rabbani regime.

Secondly, it afforded an opportunity to the opposition groups after quite some time to sit together, sort out whatever differences might have erupted between them and review their overall strategy. This they apparently did quite methodically. Then the participation of Mojaddedi in these talks was a timely reminder to the relevant quarters that the alliance remained united as ever before. The absence of the Taleban from these parleys (though their leaders were present in the capital) admittedly lessened the significance and importance of the gathering. The view that the main purpose of the Islamabad gathering was to form a grand alliance (which of course was not achieved) was probably not correct. The low-key presence of the Taleban here was apparently designed to dispel the widely held belief that Pakistan was backing the student militia.

Though the key Afghan opposition leaders Dostum and Hekmatyar met top Pakistani state functionaries — Dostum meeting both President Leghari and COAS [Chief of Army Staff] Gen Karamat and Hekmatyar calling on Leghari the government of Pakistan took care that at no stage the Afghan gathering looked Pakistan-sponsored. During all this period Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto remained in Saudi Arabia and Foreign Minister Sardar Aseff away to the United States. This, of course, has not convinced all, nay not anyone, of Pakistan's dissociation with the Islamabad gathering. However, in present day diplomacy the denial of the obvious has become a state art and this time Pakistan has exercised it, and legitimately too.

Finally, the Islamabad gathering has been an attempt to convey the message to all that Pakistan remains the biggest player on the Afghan scene and as in the past, in future too it will play a leading role in the formation of a new set-up in Afghanistan. The conveying of this message was needed. However, how well Pakistan has done it, remains to be seen.

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Pakistan: Editorial Responds To Delhi's Accusation of Terrorism Plot

BK2002080196 Islamabad THE NATION in English 20 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "A Pakistani Plot?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The high profile news conference held by the Indian Home Secretary in New Delhi, in which he accused Pakistan of plotting terrorist attacks against India with the aim of destabilising it, has many interesting features. The destabilisation of India was supposed to have been launched by Pakistan by giving two foreign nationals—a Swiss and an Iranian—361 pistols and adequate ammunition.

Pakistan's hand in it was said to have been discovered because the arms were wrapped in Pakistani newspapers and the tourist bus in which these foreigners had entered India came via Pakistan. An equally convincing pointer would have been the discovery that the pistols were manufactured by our ordnance factory.

Alas, that vital evidence was missing, leaving one to speculate whether India, or for that matter, even a city like Bombay could be destabilized with 361 pistols. Bombay, incidentally, is a city in which two thousand Muslim were massacred in just one day, without creating even a ripple in New Delhi. The Indian Home Secretary chose not to explain how those three hundred odd pistols, assuming that these were deemed enough to destabilize India, were to be distributed and to whom.

Their potential customers could not possibly be the Sikhs, because the bus had already traveled through India Punjab without any transaction having taken place and reached Delhi, where it was searched for the first time. Again, the Indian Home Secretary did not say where the bus was heading. Was it Bengal, where a foreign aircraft had dropped arms only recently, or was it Tamil Nadu where scores of Tamil Tiger agents are in the market to buy arms for transfer to Sri Lanka.

One of their arms shipments got blown up very recently. So, maybe they were interested in replenishing their stock. In other words who were the people for whom those pistols were intended? They could not be Pakistani agents for the simple reason that such agents, even if they exist, are supposed to be carrying their own weapons and not have to wait for a Swiss national to come to their rescue.

Why the Indian government chose not to look for a more plausible story, such as smuggling of arms from the Afghan border or NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] to potential crime mafias of India is obvious. It would not have made any anti-Pakistan headlines. It would have remained a minor story, ignored by the people. Pakistan has been accusing India of training and arming a number of MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] workers for acts of terrorism in Karachi and elsewhere. Some of those arrested in Sindh have already provided details of the Indian hand. The Indians were, therefore naturally on the lookout for a chance to counterattack. The arrest of the two foreigners, it seems, was too tempting an opportunity, however implausible it may otherwise be, to miss. The Indians think that the international community is gullible enough to fall for it.

Maybe they should have another look at their story. People abroad are more likely to laugh at it than believe it. Better luck next time, Mr. Home Secretary.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: LTTE Says 2 Indian Ships Involved in Attack on Cadres

BK2102092496 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Sri Lankan military officer has stated that it was the Indian Navy that provided information about the presence of the Sea Tigers ship off the coast of Mullaitivu the day before yesterday. Meanwhile, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] have alleged that two Indian naval ships assisted the Sri Lankan Navy in carrying out an offensive against the Sea Tigers on the high seas. The Indian Defense Ministry has rejected this allegation. An Indian Defense Ministry official has stated that his country was not involved in the incident. Giving his report to a BBC correspondent, a Sri Lankan military official has stated that the Indian Navy gave him the information about the movement of Sea Tigers ship. When asked whether Indian naval ships carried out the attack along with the Sri Lankan Navy, he replied that he could not comment on the matter. In his interview with the BBC, Lieutenant General Kalkat, who was commander of the Indian Peacekeeping Force in Sri Lanka, indicated that the Indian Navy normally assists its Sri Lankan counterpart by providing useful information. Moreover, he said, being members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the two countries enjoy cordial relations.

A Land Rover carrying Sri Lankan police at Pulmoddai in Trincomalee District was ambushed by the LTTE. Losses suffered by the Sri Lankan side in the attack that took place the day before yesterday could not be ascertained. The Sri Lankan Government has announced that nine policemen, including an officer, were injured. Areas like Nawakadu, Koduvamunai, Panneerkadu [place

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name as transliterated], and Karaveddi in the Eastern Province were besieged all of a sudden by Sri Lankan troops and their paid-up gangs early in the morning of 12 February. This siege was undertaken by Sri Lankan troops advancing from the Makulativu and Moonramkattai [place names as transliterated] military camps, who were later joined by the gangs of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization, and the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front. The troops, who forced all the people from these areas to gather at Nawakadu school, tortured them under the pretext of interrogating them until 1400 in the afternoon and later let them return to their homes.

Two Tamil fishermen were killed in a sniper shooting by the Sri Lankan military in Trincomalee District last Sunday. The fishermen, who were busy with their fishing operations, were attacked by the government terrorists. Ilayathambi Shanmugaraja and Ekambaram Mayilvakanam belonging to Upparu under Sector-eight are the ones who fell victims to the state-sponsored terrorism.

An 85-year old man called Vairanathan Kandasamy from Neeraviyadi was killed in the missile attack carried out by the Sri Lankan troops deployed in Jaffna. His 76-year old wife was injured in the attack.

On 11 February, a woman, Ganapathy Ponnamma, who had only given birth one month previously, sustained head and leg injuries in a shoot out by Sri Lankan troops at Mavadivembu locality in Batticaloa. Her 18-month old son sustained gunshot wounds to his back. The troops who were passing through the street committed this brutal act when the woman's family members were eating in their house.

An ambulance from the Kilinochchi hospital, which was proceeding to Colombo with patients who needed further medical care, was sent back by the military at Tandikkulam. Speaking about the incident, Dr. Sivaguru from the hospital said that the patients, who were rushed to Colombo for further emergency medical treatment, were sent back from Tandikkulam yesterday, thereby creating a situation that is hampering further emergency treatment to the needy. He also stated that the military has created a dangerous situation.

The thirst of the LTTE is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Notes Reaction in Tamil Nadu Over Indian Steps

BK2102095796 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Travelers and government officials going from the north to the south have been sent back from Tandikkulam by the military. During the past few days, people have not been able to continue their travels and hence have returned home, as the military is denying them permission.

The Sri Lankan military has been implementing this unofficial ban since last Monday. Trucks arranged by the government authorities in Mannar, Mullaitivu, and Kilinochchi Districts to bring essential goods for the people have returned, as they have not been granted permission at Tandikkulam during the past four or five days.

The Sri Lankan Defense Ministry has been delaying clearance of medicines to the hospitals in the north for the first quarter of this year. There has been an acute shortage of medicines in the hospitals of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, and Mannar Districts due to the premeditated delaying tactics adopted by the Sri Lankan Government.

A politician from Tamil Nadu says that the Indian Government's action in collusion with Sinhalese racist rulers against Tamil Eelam freedom struggle and against the people of Tamil Eelam will give rise to strong reactions in Tamil Nadu.

It has been stated that as reports have been published about the information provided by the Indian Government and its direct involvement in the attack on the ship belonging to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] last Wednesday, there is apprehension among the administrators that possible reaction to it in Tamil Nadu will go against the ruling Congress-I party. Because of this, the Indian Government is reported to have issued a statement categorically denying its involvement in the incident. Tamil Nadu politician P. Nedumaran has issued a statement condemning the incident last Wednesday in which the Indian military functioned as an accomplice of the Sri Lankan Government. His statement, which says that the Indian Government's action is totally reprehensible, has appeared in several newspapers in Tamil Nadu today.

The Sri Lankan Government has announced that it has set up an inquiry commission to investigate the massacre in Kumarapuram village in Trincomalee. Amnesty International has called upon the government of Sri Lanka to pursue the investigations instituted in the past into the numerous incidents of massacres committed by the

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Sri Lankan troops on the Tamil people. Meanwhile, Siddharthan of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam has expressed satisfaction over the announcement of the Sri Lankan Government that an inquiry commission headed by a senior military officer has been set up.

The Sri Lankan Government has launched a propaganda drive saying that security has been beefed up in the country and that foreign investors can invest in the country without any hesitation. The Sri Lankan Government is also making great efforts to revive the tourism industry in the country. Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar is taking strong measures for this purpose.

Thank you.

The thirst of the LTTE is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Reports Government Attack on Arms Ship, Other Clashes

BK1902014396 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A ship laden with explosives and two other boats of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] that were proceeding to infiltrate and attack Thirumalai Harbor engaged in heavy fighting with Sri Lankan troops at sea early yesterday morning. Two new Sri Lankan Navy warships and an Air Force Pucara aircraft and several helicopters took part in the battle that broke out at sea at about 0100. During the confrontation, the explosives- laden ship was attacked by Sri Lankan forces. The following freedom fighters were martyred in this battle off the coast of Mullaitivu: Lieutenant Colonel Yogachandran Ravikumar, alias Chodithambi or Madan, a Black Sea Tiger from Valvedditurai; Black Sea Tiger Soosaipillai Chelvakumar, alias Major Vengai, from Polikandi; and Rasamanickam Suresh, alias Captain Elankeswaran, a member of the Sea Tiger intelligence wing, from Valvedditurai.

Fighting resumed at sea in the same area at 0700. Six helicopters and Pucara bomber planes joined the fight to assist the Sri Lankan Navy, which was fatigued because it could not face the LTTE onslaught. Sri Lankan forces suspended their attack and retreated after a Sri Lankan bomber was damaged by the Sea Tigers in their daring attack against the Sri Lankan Navy and Air Force. The following freedom fighters were martyred in the fight: Sachidanandasivam Anandateerthanan, alias Captain Vanan or Michael, of the Sea Tiger contingent in Udduppiddy; and Ilayathambi Pushpalatha, alias Arul, of the Sea Tigers' women contingent in Thalayadi-Marutankeni.

A patrol party that came out of the Sri Lankan Special Task Force [STF] camp at Pullumalai in Batticaloa District was attacked by the LTTE within 700 meters of the camp around 0940 yesterday. Six STF commandos were killed while the rest retreated into the camp. The LTTE side did not suffer any losses. STF reinforcements that came to help the besieged troops were attacked by another LTTE contingent. Two LTTE fighters embraced martyrdom in the battle. Our tributes go to these great heroes who fought bravely for the liberation of our motherland.

One soldier and four policemen were killed in an attack on the checkpoint at Sambaltivu at about 1730 on 12 February launched to commemorate the martyrdom of Captain Mozhivendan, Lieutenant Chembian, and Lieutenant Ilampirayan during the siege of the Sri Lankan military in the urban area of Thirumalai District last month. Others managed to escape. Reinforcements that came to the rescue of the Sri Lankan troops were attacked by another LTTE contingent. A military vehicle was completely destroyed in the attack. The LTTE seized some military equipment, including automatic rifles and ammunition.

Six more bodies of those massacred by Sri Lankan troops at Kumarapuram in Thirumalai have been recovered. Two of the bodies are of women who are thought to have been raped and killed. The naked bodies showed wounds and were covered with canes and sticks when recovered.

Thanks. The thirst of the LTTE is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

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